

THE ADVENT

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February 1951

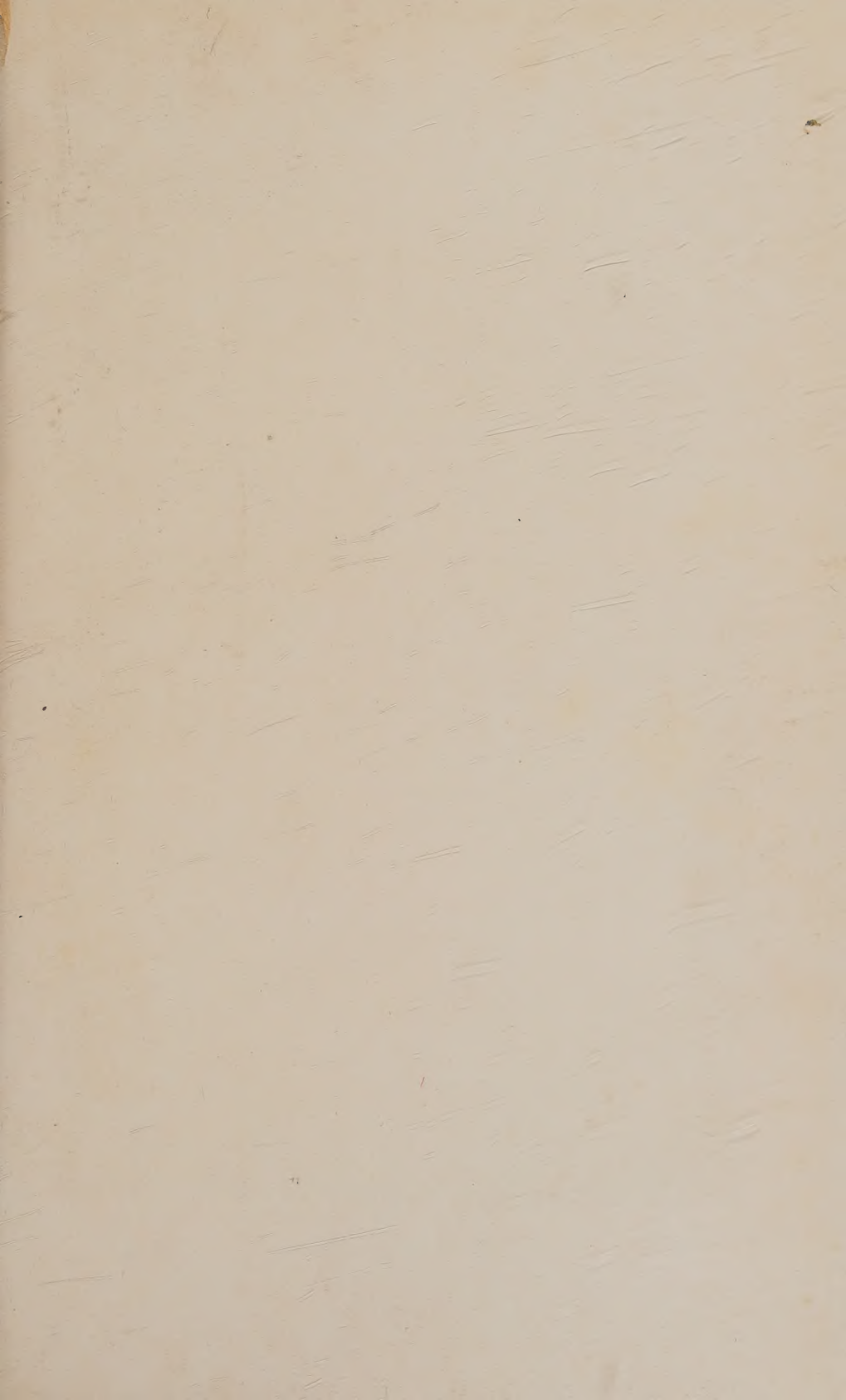
*A Quarterly Devoted to the Exposition of
Sri Aurobindo's Vision of the Future*



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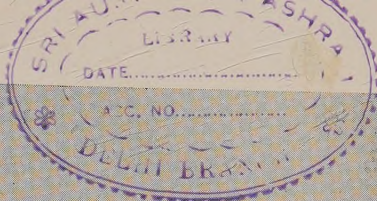
AUGUST 15, 1872

SRI AUROBINDO

DECEMBER 5, 1950



Jivammukta:
(Alcaco)



There is a silence greater than any known
To earth's dumb spirit, motionless in the soul
That has become Eternity's foothold,
Trusted by the infinitudes for ever.

A Splendour is here refused to the earthward sight
That floods some deep flame-crowned all-seeing eye, -
Revealed it wakens when God's stillness
Heavens the ocean of unvelled Nature.

A Power becoms so Felt can perturb or vanquish,
Calmer than mountains, wider than ~~moving~~ waters,
A single night of luminous ~~silence~~ quiet
Unceasingly bearing the worlds and ages.

A Bliss surrounds with ecstasy everlasting,
An absolute high-seated immortal rapture
Incessant, sealing Earth to oneness
In the grasp of the All-beautiful All-beloved.

He who from Time's dull motion escapes and trails
Rapt thoughtless, wordless into the Eternal's breast,

Unrolls the form and sign of being,
Seated above in the omnipotent Silence

← Although consenting here to a mortal body,
← He is the Undying; limit and bound he knows not;
← For him the aeons are a playground,
← Life and its deeds are his splendored shadow.

Only to bring God's' forces to waiting Nature,
To help with wide-winged Peace her tormented labours.
And heal with joy her ancient sorrow,
Casting down light on the innermost darkness

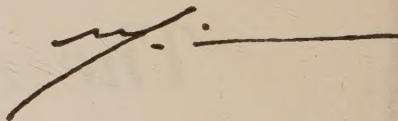
He acts and lives - Vain things are mind's smaller toys
To meet whose soul ^{enjoys} ~~has~~ ^{for its high possession}
Infinity and the sempiternal
All is his guide and beloved and refuge.



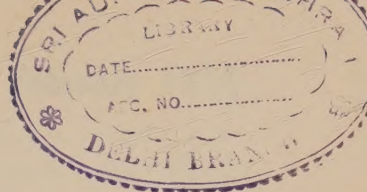
The Advent

NEW YEAR'S PRAYER

Lord, we are upon earth to accomplish Thy work of transformation. It is our sole will, our sole preoccupation. Grant that it may be also our sole occupation and that all our actions may help us towards this single goal.



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The ADVENT

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“One shall descend who shall break the iron Law
And alter Nature’s doom by the Spirit’s power.
Strength shall be with Her like a conqueror’s sword
And from her eyes the Eternal’s bliss shall gaze.
A seed shall be sown in Death’s tremendous hour,
A branch of heaven transplant to human soil;
Nature shall overleap her mortal step;
Fate shall be changed by an unchanging Will.”

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Savitri*, THE BOOK OF THE DIVINE MOTHER, CANTO IV)



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The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. - - - *Sri Aurobindo.*

EDITORIAL

AND YET HE LIVES

E PUR MUOVE—and moves among us. The Mother's messages are there to console, comfort, encourage and illumine. The appearance is, as always, a deception, a very partial and distorted view. The full orb of Truth will be revealed in "God's transfiguring hour".

THE MOTHER SAYS:

December 7, 1950

Lord, this morning Thou hast given me the assurance that Thou wouldst stay with us until Thy work is achieved, not only as a consciousness which guides and illumines but also as a dynamic Presence in action. In unmistakable terms Thou hast promised that all of Thyself would remain here and not leave the earth atmosphere until earth is transformed. Grant that we may be worthy of this marvellous Presence and that henceforth every-

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thing in us be concentrated on the one will to be more and more perfectly consecrated to the fulfilment of Thy sublime Work.

December 8, 1950

The lack of receptivity of the earth and men is mostly responsible for the decision Sri Aurobindo has taken regarding his body. But one thing is certain: what has happened on the physical plane affects in no way the truth of his teaching. All that he has said is perfectly true and remains so. Time and the course of events will prove it abundantly.

December 9, 1950

To THEE who hast been the material envelope of our Master, to THEE our infinite gratitude. Before THEE who hast done so much for us, who hast worked, struggled, suffered, hoped, endured so much, before THEE who hast willed all, attempted all, prepared, achieved all for us, before THEE we bow down and implore that we may never forget, even for a moment all we owe to THEE.

December 14, 1950

To grieve is an insult to Sri Aurobindo who is here with us, conscious and alive.

December 15, 1950

We must not be bewildered by appearances. Sri Aurobindo has not left us. Sri Aurobindo is here, as living and as present as ever and it is left to us to realise his work with all the sincerity, eagerness and concentration necessary.

December 26, 1950

Our Lord has sacrificed himself totally for us...He was not compelled to leave his body, he chose to do so for reasons so sublime that they are beyond the reach of human mentality...And when one cannot understand, the only thing to do is to keep a respectful silence.

AND YET HE LIVES

January 18, 1951

We stand in the Presence of Him who has sacrificed his physical life in order to help more fully his work of transformation.

He is always with us, aware of what we are doing, of all our thoughts, of all our feelings and all our actions.

DEFINITIONS

Integral even basis in the material: When all your material movements are organised, harmonised and co-ordinated and when all things find themselves in you in their respective places and your entire material basis is thus prepared and becomes ready to receive the Light and the Power.

Resurrection: The falling off of the old consciousness followed by the awakening of the true being out of it.

Worship: The form or outer expression of your devotion.

Surrender: The decision to hand over the responsibility of your life to the Divine. This is done either through the mind or the emotion or the life-impulse or through all of them together.

Offering: The placing of your entire being, with all its movements true and false, good and bad, right and wrong, before the Divine for transformation.

Self-giving: By this the whole being gets progressively unified round the central psychic being.

Consecration: is the consummation, when the Light has illumined all the parts of your being, with a central will acting on the feelings, impulses, thoughts, emotions, activities, directing them always toward the Divine and when you move no more from darkness to light or from falsehood to truth or from misery to happiness but from light to more light, from truth to greater truth, from happiness to increasing happiness.

Savitri

BOOK IV

THE BOOK OF BIRTH AND QUEST

CANTO IV

THE QUEST

THE world-ways opened before Savitri.
At first a strangeness of new brilliant scenes
Peopled her mind and kept her body's gaze.
But as she moved across the changing earth
A deeper consciousness welled up in her:
A citizen of many scenes and climes,
Each soil and country it has made its home;
It took all clans and peoples for her own,
Till the whole destiny of mankind was hers.
These unfamiliar spaces on her way
Were known and neighbours to a sense within;
Landscapes recurred like lost forgotten fields,
Cities and rivers and plains her vision claimed
Like slow-recurring memories in front,
The stars at night were her past's brilliant friends,
The winds murmured to her of ancient things
And she met nameless comrades loved by her once.
All was a part of old forgotten selves.
Vaguely or with a flash of sudden hints
Her acts recalled a line of bygone power,
Even her motion's purpose was not new:
Traveller to a prefigured high event,
She seemed to her remembering witness soul

SAVITRI

To trace again a journey often made.
A guidance turned the dumb revolving wheels
And in the eager body of their speed
The dim-masked hooded godheads rode who move
Assigned to man immutably from his birth,
Receivers of the inner and outer law,
At once the agents of his spirit's will
And witnesses and executors of his fate.
Inexorably faithful to their task,
They hold his nature's sequence in their guard
Carrying the unbroken thread old lives have spun.
Attendants on his destiny's measured walk
Leading to joys he has won and pains he has called,
Even in his casual steps they intervene.
Nothing we think or do is void or vain;
Each is an energy loosed and holds its course.
The shadowy keepers of our deathless past
Have made our fate the child of our own acts,
And from the furrows laboured by our will
We reap the fruit of our forgotten deeds.
But since unseen the tree that bore this fruit
And we live in a present born from an unknown past,
They seem but parts of a mechanic Force,
To a mechanic mind tied by earth's laws;
Yet are they instruments of a Will supreme,
Watched by a still all-seeing Eye above.
A prescient architect of Fate and Chance
Who builds our lives on a foreseen design
The meaning knows and consequence of each step
And watches the inferior stumbling powers.
Upon her silent heights she was aware
Of a calm Presence throned above her brows
Who saw the goal and chose each fateful curve;
It used the body for its pedestal,
The eyes that wandered were its searchlight fires,
The hands that held the reins its living tools;
All was the working of an ancient plan,
A way prepared by an unerring Guide.

THE ADVENT

Across wide noons and glowing afternoons,
She met with Nature and with human forms
And listened to the voices of the world;
Driven from within she followed her long road,
Mute in the luminous cavern of her heart,
Like a bright cloud through the resplendent day.
At first her path ran far through peopled tracts:
Admitted to the lion eye of States
And theatres of the loud act of man,
Her carven chariot with its fretted wheels
Threaded through clamorous marts and sentinel towers
Past figured gates and high dream-sculptured fronts
And gardens hung in the sapphire of the skies,
Pillared assembly halls with armoured guards,
Small fanes where one calm Image watched man's life
And temples hewn as if by exiled gods
To imitate their lost eternity.
Often from gilded dusk to argent dawn
Where jewel-lamps flickered on frescoed walls
And the stone lattice stared at moonlit boughs,
Half-conscious of the tardy listening night
Dimly she glided between banks of sleep
At rest in the slumbering palaces of kings.
Hamlet and village saw the fate-van pass,
Homes of a life bent to the soil it ploughs
For sustenance of its short and passing days
That, transient, keep their old repeated course
Unchanging in the circle of a sky
Which alters not above our mortal toil.
Away from this thinking creature's burdened hours
To free and griefless spaces now she turned
Not yet perturbed by human joys and fears.
Here was the childhood of primeval earth,
Here timeless musings large and glad and still,
Men had forborne as yet to fill with cares.
Imperial acres of the eternal sower
And wind-stirred grass-lands winking in the sun:
Or mid green musing of woods and rough-browed hills,

SAVITRI

In the grove's murmurous bee-air humming wild
Or past the long lapsing voice of silver floods
Like a swift hope journeying among its dreams
Hastened the chariot of the golden bride.
Out of the world's immense unhuman past
Tract-memories and ageless remnants came,
Domains of light enfeoffed to an antique calm
Listened to the unaccustomed sound of hooves
And large immune entangled silences
Absorbed her into emerald secrecy
And slow hushed wizard nets of faery bloom
Environed with their coloured snare her wheels.
The strong importunate feet of Time fell soft
Along these lonely ways, his titan pace
Forgotten and his stark and ruinous rounds.
The inner ear that listens to solitude,
Leaning self-rapt unboundedly could hear
The rhythm of the intenser wordless Thought
That gathers in the silence behind life,
And the low sweet inarticulate voice of earth
In the great passion of her sun-kissed trance
Ascended with its yearning undertone.
Afar from the brute noise of clamorous needs
The quieted all-seeking mind could feel,
At rest from its blind outwardness of will,
The unwearied clasp of her mute patient love
And know for a soul the mother of our forms.
This spirit stumbling in the fields of sense,
This creature bruised in the mortar of the days
Could find in her broad spaces of release.
Not yet was a world all occupied by care.
The bosom of our mother kept for us still
Her austere regions and her musing depths,
Her impersonal reaches lonely and inspired
And the mightinesses of her rapture haunts.
Muse-lipped she nursed her symbol mysteries
And guarded for her pure-eyed sacraments
The valley-clefts between her breasts of joy,

THE ADVENT

Her mountain-altars for the fires of dawn
And nuptial beaches where the ocean couched
And the huge chanting of her prophet woods.
Fields had she of her solitary mirth,
Plains hushed and happy in the embrace of light,
Alone with the cry of birds and hue of flowers
And wildernesses of wonder lit by her moons
And grey seer-evenings kindling with the stars
And dim movement in the night's infinitude.
August, exulting in her Maker's eye,
She felt her nearness to him in earth's breast,
Conversed still with a Light behind the veil,
Still communed with Eternity beyond.
A few and fit inhabitants she called
To share the glad communion of her peace;
The breadth, the summit were their natural home.
The strong king-sages from their labour done,
Freed from the warrior tension of their task,
Came to her serene sessions in these wilds;
The strife was over, the respite lay in front.
Happy they lived with birds and beasts and flowers
And sunlight and the rustle of the leaves,
And heard the wild winds wandering in the night,
Mused with the stars in their mute constant ranks,
And lodged in the mornings as in azure tents,
And with the glory of the noons were one.
Some deeper plunged; from life's external clasp
Beckoned into a fiery privacy
In the soul's unassailed star-white recess
They sojourned with an ever-living Bliss;
A Voice profound in the ecstasy and the hush
They heard, beheld an all-revealing Light.
All time-made difference they overcame;
The world was fibred with their own heart-strings;
Close-drawn to the heart that beats in every breast,
They reached the one self in all through boundless love.
Attuned to Silence and to the world-rhyme,
They loosened the knot of the imprisoning mind;

SAVITRI

Achieved was the wide untroubled witness gaze,
Unsealed was Nature's great spiritual eye;
To the height of heights rose now their daily climb:
Truth leaned to them from her supernal realm;
Above them blazed eternity's mystic suns.
Nameless the austere ascetics without home
Abandoning speech and motion and desire,
Aloof from creatures sat absorbed, alone,
Immaculate in tranquil heights of self
On concentration's luminous voiceless peaks,
World-naked hermits with their matted hair
Immobile as the passionless great hills
Around them grouped like thoughts of some vast mood
Awaiting the Infinite's behest to end.
The seers attuned to the universal Will,
Content in Him who smiles behind earth's forms,
Abode ungrieved by the insistent days.
About them like green trees girdling a hill
Young grave disciples fashioned by their touch,
Trained to the simple act and conscious word,
Greatened within and grew to meet their heights.
Far-wandering seekers on the Eternal's path
Brought to these quiet founts their spirit's thirst
And spent the treasure of a silent hour
Bathed in the purity of the mild gaze
That, uninsistent, ruled them from its peace,
And by its influence found the ways of calm.
The Infants of the monarchy of the worlds,
The heroic leaders of a coming time,
King-children nurtured in that spacious air
Like lions gambolling in sky and sun
Received half-consciously their godlike stamp:
Formed in the type of the high thoughts they sang
They learned the wide magnificence of mood
That makes us comrades of the cosmic urge,
No longer chained to their small separate selves,
Plastic and firm beneath the eternal hand,
Met Nature with a bold and friendly clasp

THE ADVENT

And served in her the Power that shapes her works,
One-souled to all and free from narrowing bonds,
Large like a continent of warm sunshine
In wide equality's impartial joy,
These sages breathed for God's delight in things.
Assisting the slow entries of the gods,
Sowing in young minds immortal thoughts they lived,
Taught the great Truth to which man's race must rise
Or opened the gates of freedom to a few,
Imparting to our struggling world the Light
They breathed like spirits from Time's dull yoke released,
Comrades and vessels of the cosmic Force,
Using a natural mastery like the sun's:
Their speech, their silence was a help to earth.
A magic happiness flowed from their touch;
Oneness was sovereign in that sylvan peace,
The wild beast joined in friendship with its prey,
Persuading the hatred and the strife to cease
The love that flows from the one Mother's breast
Healed with their hearts the herd and wounded world.
Others escaped from the confines of thoughts,
To where Mind motionless sleeps waiting Light's birth,
And came back quivering with a nameless Force
Drunk with a wine of lightning in their cells;
Intuitive knowledge leaping into speech,
Hearing the subtle voice that clothes the heavens,
Carrying the splendour that has lit the suns,
They sang Infinity's names and deathless powers
In metres that reflect the moving worlds,
Sight's sound-waves breaking from the soul's great deeps.
Some lost to the person and his strip of thought
In a motionless ocean of impersonal Power,
Sat mighty, visioned with the Infinite's Light,
Or, comrades of the everlasting Will,
Surveyed the plan of past and future Time.
Some winged like birds out of the cosmic sea
And vanished into a bright and featureless Vast:
Some silent watched the universal dance,

SAVITRI

Or helped the world by world-indifference.
Some watched no more merged in a lonely Self,
Absorbed in the trance from which no soul returns,
All the occult world-lines for ever closed,
The chains of birth and person cast away:
Some unaccompanied reached the Ineffable.

As floats a sunbeam through a shady place,
The golden virgin in her carven car
Came gliding among meditation's seats.
Often in twilight mid returning troops
Of cattle thickening with their dust the shades
When the loud day had slipped below the verge,
Arriving in a peaceful hermit grove
She rested drawing round her like a cloak
Its spirit of patient muse and potent prayer.
Or, near to a lion river's tawny mane
And trees that worshipped on a praying shore,
A domed and templed air's serene repose
Beckoned to her hurrying wheels to stay their speed.
In the solemnity of a space that seemed
A mind remembering ancient silences,
Where to the heart great bygone voices called
And the large liberty of brooding seers
Had left the long impress of their soul's scene
Awake in candid dawn or darkness mooned,
To the still touch inclined the daughter of Flame
Drank in hushed splendour between tranquil lids
And felt the kinship of eternal calm.
But morn broke in reminding her of her quest
And from low rustic couch or mat she rose
And went impelled on her unfinished way
And followed the fateful orbit of her life
Like a desire that questions silent gods,
Then passes starlike to some bright Beyond.
Thence to great solitary tracts she came,
Where man was a passer-by towards human scenes
Or sole in Nature's vastness strove to live

THE ADVENT

And called for help to ensouled invisible Powers,
Overwhelmed by the immensity of his world
And unaware of his own infinity.
The Earth multiplied to her a changing brow
And called her with a far and nameless voice.
The mountains in their anchorite solitude,
The forests with their multitudinous chant
Disclosed to her the masked divinity's doors.
On dreaming plains, an indolent expanse,
The death-bed of a pale enchanted eve
Under the glamour of a sunken sky,
Impassive she lay as at an age's end,
Or crossed an eager pack of huddled hills
Lifting their heads to hunt a lairlike sky,
Or travelled in a strange and empty land
Where desolate summits camped in a weird heaven,
Mute sentinels beneath a drifting moon,
Or wandered in some lone tremendous wood
Ringing for ever with the crickets' cry
Or followed a long glistening serpent road
Through fields and pastures lapped in moveless light
Or reached the wild beauty of a desert space
Where never plough was driven nor herd had grazed
And slumbered upon stripped and thirsty sands
Amid the savage wild-beast Night's appeal,
Still unaccomplished was the fateful quest;
Still she found not the one predestined face
For which she sought amid the sons of men.
A grandiose silence wrapped the regal day.
The months had fed the passion of the sun
And now his burning breath assailed the soil.
The tiger heats prowled through the fainting earth;
All was licked up as by a lolling tongue.
The spring winds failed; the sky was set like bronze.

END OF BOOK IV

SRI AUROBINDO

THOUGHTS AND GLIMPSES*

(New Series)

THE boon that we have asked from the Supreme is the greatest that the Earth can ask from the Highest, the change that is most difficult to realise, the most exacting in its conditions. It is nothing less than the descent of the supreme Truth and Power into Matter, the supramental established in the material plane and consciousness and the material world and an integral transformation down to the very principle of Matter. Only a supreme Grace can effect this miracle.

The supreme Power has descended into the most material consciousness but it has stood there behind the density of the physical veil, demanding before manifestation, before its great open workings can begin, that the conditions of the supreme Grace shall be there, real and effective.

A total surrender, an exclusive self-opening to the divine influence, a constant and integral choice of the Truth and rejection of the falsehood, these are the only conditions made. But these must be fulfilled entirely, without reserve, without any evasion or pretence, simply and sincerely down to the most physical consciousness and its workings.

*
**

To be one with the Eternal is the object of Yoga; there is no other object. All other aims are included in this one divine perfection.

To be one with the Eternal is to be one with him in being, consciousness, power and delight. All that is summed in these four terms of the infinite, for all else are but their workings.

To be one with the Eternal is also to live in the Eternal and from him and in his presence and from his infinite nature,—*sāyujya*, *sālokya*, *sāṃipya*, *sādrishya*. These four together are one way of being and one perfection.

* From the unpublished writings of Sri Aurobindo

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To live in the Eternal is also to live with the Eternal within us. Whosoever consciously inhabits his being, his conscious presence inhabits. God lives and moves and acts in us when we live and move and act in him.

*
**

One that is Two that are Many,—this is the formula of the eternal and timeless manifestation in the worlds of Sachchidananda.

One who is Two and becomes the Two who become Many,—this is the formula of the perpetual manifestation in time in the three worlds of Mind, Life and Matter.

One who is in himself for ever the Two and for ever innumerably All and Eternal and Infinite, this is the indication of the Supreme who is beyond Time and Timelessness in the highest Absolute.

*
**

The One is Four for ever in his supramental quaternary of Being, Consciousness, Force and Ananda.

Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Krishna, these are the eternal Four, the quadruple Infinite.

Brahma is the Eternal's Personality of existence, from him all is created, by his presence, by his power, by his impulse.

Vishnu is the Eternal's Personality of Consciousness; in him all is supported, in his wideness, in his stability, in his substance.

Shiva is the Eternal's Personality of Force; through him all is created, through his passion, through his rhythm, through his concentration.

Krishna is the Eternal's Personality of Ananda; because of him all creation is possible, because of his play, because of his delight, because of his sweetness.

Brahma is Immortality, Vishnu is Eternity, Shiva is Infinite; Krishna is the Supreme's eternal, infinite, immortal Self-play—self-issuing, self-manifestation, self-finding.

*
**

Nothing can arise from Nothing. Asat, nothingness, is a creation of our mind; where it cannot see or conceive, where its object is something beyond

THOUGHTS AND GLIMPSES

its grasp, too much beyond to give even the sense of a vague intangible, then it cries, out "Here there is nothing." Out of its own incapacity it has created the conception of a zero. But what in truth is this zero? It is an incalculable Infinite.

Our sense by its incapacity has invented darkness. In truth there is nothing but Light, only it is a power of light either above or below our poor human vision's limited range.

For do not imagine that light is created by the Suns. The Suns are only physical concentrations of Light, but the splendour they concentrate for us is self-born and everywhere.

God is everywhere and wherever God is, there is Light. *Jnanam chaitanyam jyotir Brahma.*

*
**

Of all that we know we know only the outside; even when we imagine that we have intimately seized the innermost thing, we have touched only an inner external. It is still a sheath of the covering, only it is a second or third or even a seventh sheath, not the most outward and visible.

It is the same when we think we know God or have possession of our highest inmost Self or have entered intimately into the inmost and supreme Spirit. What we know and possess is a power or some powers of God, an aspect or appearance or formulation of the Self; what we have entered into is only one wideness and one depth of the Spirit.

This is because we know and possess by the mind or even what is below the mind, and when we find ourselves most spiritual, it is the mind spiritualised that conceives of itself as Spirit. Imagining that we have left mind behind us, we take it with us into its own spiritual realms and cover with it the Supramental Mystery. The result is something to us wonderful and intense; but compared with That Intensity and Wonder, it is something thin and inadequate.

SRI AUROBINDO

ON SRI KRISHNA

A Letter from a Disciple

YESTERDAY evening as I went out for a walk on the beach, I was thinking on the problem of the Supramental Yoga and on the mighty endeavour which Sri Aurobindo was making of bringing down the Supramental on the physical. My thoughts drifted to his opinion that we should not belittle his effort in the above direction as no one up to this time had succeeded in bringing down the Light on the physical. I naturally asked myself the question "Did not even Sri Krishna who is commonly looked upon as 'Purna Avatar' succeed in bringing down the Light on the physical?" I revolved this question in my mind over and over again and then returned to my room.

When I sat for the meditation at night time, the above question came back to me with an answer that Sri Krishna brought down Light on the vital only; he did not bring down Light on the physical. I asked for an explanation and in reply the inner significance of the allegorical anecdote of "Kaliya-Mardan" (i.e., Sri Krishna's conquest of the "Kali Nag") was enrolled to me with the explanation as under:

One day Sri Krishna was playing on the banks of the river Yamuna with a ball. Now a "ball" or a round disc is the symbol of the sun, i.e., the light of the illumination and the "play" shows the enjoyment or Ananda, which is the result of the illumination. Here Sri Krishna is playing with a ball on the "Bank", on the dry land which stands for the mind—being dry or unemotional. In other words, Sri Krishna is getting the light on the mind and is enjoying the ecstasy thereof.

After some time the ball slips in the river Yamuna and Sri Krishna's play comes to an end.

Here river Yamuna is the symbol of the vital or the flowing substance and the significance of the ball going into it is that the Light descends into the vital and the "play", i.e., the ecstasy and the illumination is gone.

ON SRI KRISHNA

Sri Krishna jumps into the river to recover the ball, that is to say, he tackles the vital to get back the light.

Now this river Yamuna was dark and dangerous and nobody could even bathe in it, because a huge serpent named the "Kali Nag" dwelt in it.

The significance is that before the coming of Sri Krishna the vital was impure and could not be used for "Bathing," i.e., spiritual purpose, and it was the home of dark forces, (serpent).

Sri Krishna tries to conquer the serpent and to drive him out of the Yamuna (the vital). At first he is offered high rewards by the Naga Dasis (i.e., wives of the serpent) in order to induce him to turn back, but when he persists in his object he is threatened with deadly consequences. This shows the way in which every Yogi is treated by the dark forces, when he wants to achieve some victory over them.

But Sri Krishna does not falter and hence becomes victorious in the end. He succeeds in conquering the snake and expelling it from the river, i.e., in purifying and illumining the vital.

The snake originally remained coiled round the throne of "Indra," i.e., at first the ignorance prevailed up to the region of the mind.

But there enmity grew up between this serpent and "Garuda," the heavenly bird who lives on snakes and who bears Vishnu on his wings. On account of this enmity the serpent came and dwelt in the river Yamuna. Here "Garuda" stands for the intuition which brings the illumination (Vishnu) and swallows up or dispells the darkness (snakes). The significance of the whole is that the dark forces having been expelled by the Light in the mind, came and dwelt in the vital, from where they were again expelled by Sri Krishna.

But when this "Kali Nag" is ordered by Sri Krishna to leave the Yamuna he does not know where to go, as he cannot go back to the Court of Indra, because of the presence of Garuda there. Sri Krishna therefore permits him to go and remain in the deep seas assuring him that "Garuda" would not attack him there. The "Sea" here stands for something dark, deep, unfathomable and immovable, i.e., the physical where "Garuda" (intuition) has not yet descended.

Sri Krishna emerges victorious out of the river Yamuna but with a black (*shyama*) body on account of his fight with the poisonous snake. Sri Krishna's body is microcosmic and therefore the significance is that the darkness having been expelled from the vital, comes and remains in the physical plane, and gives its colour to it as it happened in the case of Nilakantha (Shiva).

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Sri Krishna up to the end of his life retained this *shyama* body which signifies that in his life-time he was not able to expel the poison from the physical.

Therefore the body of the coming Incarnation will be white and luminous, because he will have succeeded in expelling the darkness from and in bringing down the Light on the physical plane.

Here I interposed a question. What was the outcome of Sri Krishna's purification and illumination of the vital?

The answer came that the purification and illumination of the vital by Sri Krishna opened up a possibility for a new type of Bhakti Yoga. There is a vast difference between Radha's *prema* and Hanuman's devotion. Hanuman's relation to Sri Rama was that of servant to the Master.

But Radha and the Gopis worshipped Sri Krishna as a husband. Now the word husband in the ordinary sense connotes sexual relation. But on account of purification and illumination of the vital by Sri Krishna, it became possible to spiritualise the sexual and other passions and emotions of the vital being and eventually to bring about a synthesis of thought, emotion and will.

I have put down the substance of the answer as it has come to me, I want to know how far it represents a truth.

28-6-1927

SRI AUROBINDO'S ANSWER

The interpretation of Kaliya-Mardan given to you is quite accurate except in one or two details: Garuda is not the intuition and Vishnu is not the illumination. Vishnu is the eternal stability of the Divine power, consciousness and existence; he is supported on the Garuda who is the winged force of the psychic.

Indra, the divine or illumined mind, is helped and kept free from the encoiling of his throne by the snake and its obscuration of his light by the presence of Garuda.

All the rest is almost entirely accurate; it is intuitive with remarkably little mixture from the mental ignorance and its mistakes. This shows that the Mother has already opened your mind to the Light and that some transformation has begun. It is only the first steps of a beginning but it is a very good beginning.

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BHAKTI in itself is as wide as the heart-yearning of the soul for the Divine and as simple and straightforward as love and desire going straight towards their object. It cannot, therefore, be fixed down to any systematic method, cannot found itself on a psychological science like the Rajayoga, or a psycho-physical like the Hathayoga, or start from a definite intellectual process like the ordinary method of the Jnanayoga. It may employ various means or supports, and man, having in him a tendency towards order, process and system, may try to methodise his resort to these auxiliaries: but to give an account of their variations one would have to review almost all man's numberless religions upon their side of inner approach to the Deity. Really, however, the more intimate Yoga of Bhakti resolves itself simply into these four movements, the desire of the soul when it turns towards God and the straining of its emotion towards him, the pain of love and the divine return of love, the delight of love possessed and the play of that delight, and the eternal enjoyment of the divine Lover which is the heart of celestial bliss. These are things that are at once too simple and too profound for methodising or for analysis. One can at best only say, here are these four successive elements, steps, if we may so call them, of the siddhi, and here are, largely, some of the means which it uses, and here, again, are some of the aspects and experiences of the sadhana of devotion. We need only trace broadly the general line they follow before we turn to consider how the way of devotion enters into a synthetic and integral Yoga, what place it takes there and how its principle affects the other principles of divine living.

All Yoga is a turning of the human mind and the human soul not yet divine in realisation, but feeling the divine impulse and attraction in it, towards that by which it finds its greater being. Emotionally, the first form which this turning takes must be that of adoration. In ordinary religion

* *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Part II (The Yoga of Divine Love), Chapter 4

this adoration wears the form of external worship and that, again, develops a most external form of ceremonial worship. This element is ordinarily necessary because the mass of men live in their physical minds, cannot realise anything except by the force of a physical symbol and cannot feel that they are living anything except by the force of a physical action. We might apply here the Tantric gradation of *sadhana*, which makes the way of the *pashu*, the herd, the animal or physical being, the lowest stage of its discipline, and say that the purely or predominantly ceremonial adoration is the first step of this lowest part of the way. It is evident that even real religion—and Yoga is something more than religion—only begins when this quite outward worship corresponds to something really felt within the mind, some genuine submission, awe or spiritual aspiration, to which it becomes an aid, an outward expression and also a sort of periodical or constant reminder helping to draw back the mind to it from the preoccupations of ordinary life. But so long as it is only an idea of the Godhead to which one renders reverence or homage, we have not yet got to the beginning of Yoga. The aim of Yoga being union, its beginning must always be a seeking after the Divine, a longing after some kind of touch, closeness or possession. When this comes on us, the adoration becomes always primarily an inner worship; we begin to make ourselves a temple of the Divine, our thoughts and feelings a constant prayer of aspiration and seeking, our whole life an external service and worship. It is as this change, this new soul-tendency grows, that the religion of the devotee becomes a Yoga, a growing contact and union. It does not follow that the outward worship will necessarily be dispensed with, but it will increasingly become only a physical expression or outflowing of the inner devotion and adoration, the wave of the soul throwing itself out in speech and symbolic act.

Adoration, before it turns into an element of the deeper Yoga of devotion, a petal of the flower of love, its homage and self-uplifting to its sun, must bring with it, if it is profound, an increasing consecration of the being to the Divine who is adored. And one element of this consecration must be a self-purifying so as to become fit for the divine contact, or for the entrance of the Divine into the temple of our inner being, or for his self-revelation in the shrine of the heart. This purifying may be ethical in its character, but it will not be merely the moralist's seeking for the right and blameless action or even, when once we reach the stage of Yoga, an obedience to the law of God as revealed in formal religion; but it will be a throwing away, *katharsis*, of all that conflicts whether with the idea of the Divine in himself

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or of the Divine in ourselves. In the former case it becomes in habit of feeling and outer act an imitation of the Divine, in the latter a growing into his likeness in our nature. What inner adoration is to ceremonial worship, this growing into the divine likeness is to the outward ethical life. It culminates in a sort of liberation by likeness of the Divine,¹ a liberation from our lower nature and a change into the divine nature.

Consecration becomes in its fullness a devoting of all our being to the Divine; therefore also of all our thoughts and our works. Here the Yoga takes into itself the essential elements of the Yoga of Works and the Yoga of Knowledge, but in its own manner and with its own peculiar spirit. It is a sacrifice of life and works to the Divine, but a sacrifice of love more than a tuning of the will to the divine Will. The bhakta offers up his life and all that he is and all that he has and all that he does to the Divine. This surrender may take the ascetic form, as when he leaves the ordinary life of men and devotes his days solely to prayer and praise and worship or to ecstatic meditation, gives up his personal possessions and becomes the monk or the mendicant whose one only possession is the Divine, gives up all action in life except those only which help or belong to the communion with the Divine and communion with other devotees, or at most keeps the doing from the secure fortress of the ascetic life of those services to men which seem peculiarly the outflowing of the divine nature of love, compassion and good. But there is the wider self-consecration, proper to any integral Yoga, which, accepting the fullness of life and the world in its entirety as the play of the Divine, offers up the whole being into his possession; it is a holding of all one is and has as belonging to him only and not to ourselves and a doing of all works as an offering to him. By this comes the complete active consecration of both the inner and the outer life, the unmutilated self-giving.

There is also the consecration of the thoughts to the Divine. In its inception this is the attempt to fix the mind on the object of adoration,—for naturally the restless human mind is occupied with other objects and, even when it is directed upwards, constantly drawn away by the world—so that in the end it habitually thinks of him and all else is only secondary and thought of only in relation to him. This is done often with the aid of a physical image or, more intimately and characteristically, of a mantra or a divine name through which the divine being is realised. There are supposed by those who systematise, to be three stages of the seeking through the devotion of

¹ *sādrishya-mukti*

the mind, first the constant hearing of the divine name, qualities and all that has been attached to them, secondly, the constant thinking on them or on the divine being or personality, thirdly, the settling and fixing of the mind on the object; and by this comes the full realisation. And by these, too, there comes when the accompanying feeling or the concentration is very intense, the Samadhi, the ecstatic trance in which the consciousness passes away from outer objects. But all this is really incidental; the one thing essential is the intense devotion of the thought in the mind to the object of adoration. Although it seems akin to the contemplation of the way of knowledge, it differs from that in its spirit. It is in its real nature not a still, but an ecstatic contemplation; it seeks not to pass into the being of the Divine, but to bring the Divine into ourselves and to lose ourselves in the deep ecstasy of his presence or of his possession; and its bliss is not the peace of unity, but the ecstasy of union. Here, too, there may be the separative self-consecration which ends in the giving up of all other thought of life for the possession of this ecstasy, eternal afterwards in planes beyond, or the comprehensive consecration in which all the thoughts are full of the Divine and even in the occupations of life every thought remembers him. As in the other Yogas, so in this, one comes to see the Divine everywhere and in all and to pour out the realisation of the Divine in all one's inner activities and outward actions. But all is supported here by the primary force of the emotional union: for it is by love that the entire self-consecration and the entire possession is accomplished, and thought and action become shapes and figures of the divine love which possesses the spirit and its members.

This is the ordinary movement by which what may be at first a vague adoration of some idea of the Divine takes on the hue and character and then, once entered into the path of Yoga, the inner reality and intense experience of divine love. But there is the more intimate Yoga which from the first consists in this love and attains only by the intensity of its longing without other process or method. All the rest comes, but it comes out of this, as leaf and flower out of the seed; other things are not the means of developing and fulfilling love, but the radiations of love already growing in the soul. This is the way that the soul follows when, while occupied perhaps with the normal human life, it has heard the flute of the Godhead behind the near screen of secret woodlands and no longer possesses itself, can have no satisfaction or rest till it has pursued and seized and possessed the divine Flute-player. This is in essence the power of love itself in the heart and soul

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turning from earthly objects to the spiritual source of all beauty and delight. There live in this seeking all the sentiment and passion, all the moods and experiences of love concentrated on a supreme object of desire and intensified a hundredfold beyond the highest acme of intensity possible to a human love. There is the disturbance of the whole life, the illumination by an unseized vision, the unsatisfied yearning for a single object of the heart's desire, the intense impatience of all that distracts from the one preoccupation, the intense pain of the obstacles that stand in the way of possession, the perfect vision of all beauty and delight in a single form. And there are all the many moods of love, the joy of musing and absorption, the delight of the meeting and fulfilment and embrace, the pain of separation, the wrath of love, the tears of longing, the increased delight of reunion. The heart is the scene of this supreme idyll of the inner consciousness, but a heart which undergoes increasingly an intense spiritual change and becomes the radiantly unfolding lotus of the spirit. And as the intensity of its seeking is beyond the highest power of the normal human emotions, so also the delight and the final ecstasy are beyond the reach of the imagination and beyond expression by speech. For this is the delight of the Godhead that passes human understanding.

Indian bhakti has given to this divine love powerful forms, poetic symbols which are not in reality so much symbols as intimate expressions of truth which can find no other expression. It uses human relations and sees a divine person, not as mere figures, but because there are divine relations of supreme Delight and Beauty with the human soul of which human relations are the imperfect but still the real type, and because that Delight and Beauty are not abstractions or qualities of a quite impalpable metaphysical entity, but the very body and form of the supreme Being. It is a living Soul to which the soul of the bhakta yearns; for the source of all life is not an idea or a conception or a state of existence, but a real Being. Therefore, in the possession of the divine Beloved all the life of the soul is satisfied and all the relations by which it finds and in which it expresses itself, are wholly fulfilled; therefore, too, by any and all of them can the Beloved be sought, though those which admit the greatest intensity, are always those by which he can be most intensely pursued and possessed with the profoundest ecstasy. He is sought within in the heart and therefore apart from all by an inward-gathered concentration of the being in the soul itself; but he is also seen and loved everywhere where he manifests his being. All the beauty and joy of existence is seen as his joy and beauty; he is embraced

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by the spirit in all beings; the ecstasy of love enjoyed pours itself out in a universal love; all existence becomes a radiation of its delight and even in its very appearances is transformed into something other than its outward appearance. The world itself is experienced as a play of the divine Delight, a Lila, and that in which world loses itself is the heaven of beatitude of the eternal union.

SRI AUROBINDO

It is not the work as a thing for its own sake, but one's doing of it and one's way of doing it that one has to dedicate to the Divine. Done in that spirit, it does not matter what the work is. If one trains oneself spiritually like that, then one will be ready to do in the true way whatever special work directly for the Divine, one may any day be given to do.

Sept. 1935

SRI AUROBINDO

THE MOTHER ON YOGIC ACTION

(V)

IMMENSELY more than the ordinary worldly life, the spiritual life is a battlefield, where each inch of ground has to be won by hard fight; and it is always—except at a very advanced stage—a fight against tremendously heavy odds. Besides, what immeasurably increases the difficulty of the struggle, is that the forces we fight are not outside, but within us, within our psychological constitution, though foreign to our true self. It is a fight in oneself, a remorseless, tireless fight for the excision of the exotic and the excrescent and the expulsion of the malignant intruders and the purveyors of poison and pestilence. There is no force outside that can really harm us, so long as there is none within us to respond to it.

But, it may be asked, are there not forces hostile to us and to our spiritual progress, which attack us from outside? It must be admitted at once that there are, no doubt, many such forces in the world, and that they do strive to delude or thwart us; but if we oppose them with a calm and resolute rejection, fortified by divine protection which a sincere call can never fail to secure, and if nothing in us responds or gives the slightest opening to them, they may invade, but can never injure us. But are there not forces and elements in the world, it may be asked again, which are vowed to prevent a collective advance of man towards the Divine and His descent and emergence for self-manifestation in human life? Will an exclusively subjective self-discipline be effective enough against them? And granting that it is effective, will it be effective to the extent of conquering and converting them altogether?

The last question raises an important issue. Spiritual victory has two aspects, the inner and the outer; and a complete victory must comprise both. Self-mastery and world-mastery, *Swarajya-siddhi* and *Samrajya-siddhi* have been the highest ideal of the most dynamic spiritual cultures of the remote past. But self-mastery or *Swarajya-siddhi* is the first indispensable achievement, and without it the second is impossible. It is only

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when one is master of oneself that one can hope and endeavour to be master of the world. It is a wrong strategy to launch upon aggression before consolidating the defence. But when one realises one's true self, one finds it widening into infinity. It is realised not only as an individual entity, but also as universal and transcendent; and then nothing remains outside—all is seen and felt and tackled in oneself. It is only when we have this comprehensive realisation of ourself containing the whole universe, that we understand that there is no outside and inside; and not before that. It is only then that we appreciate the truth of what the Mother means when she says:—

“It is in oneself that there are all the obstacles, it is in oneself that there are all the difficulties, it is in oneself that there is all the darkness and ignorance. Even if we were to travel across the whole earth, bury ourselves in some solitary place, break with all our habits, lead the most ascetic life, still if some bond of illusion held back the consciousness far from Thy absolute Consciousness, if some egoistic attachment deprived us of the integral communion with Thy divine Love, we should be no nearer to Thee, whatever might be the outer circumstances. Are there even circumstances more or less favourable? I doubt it; it is the idea we form of them which enables us to profit better or worse by the lessons they give us.”¹

First, then, a thorough cleansing of our inner being, an uncompromising elimination of all that stands in the way of our total self-consecration to the Divine. At this stage of the Yoga, it will be more and more evident that the real causes of our difficulties lie within us and that the outer buffet is only a reflex action and a reminder of them. It would be futile to contend with the outer circumstances without conquering the inner impurities and weaknesses which render our being vulnerable to their attacks. All the obstacles we meet with, all the difficulties we knock against, all the darkness and ignorance which cause stumbles and suffering are, as the Mother says, within us; and it is the most primary and principal part of Yogic discipline to look within with an honest, dispassionate and searching eye, and spot even each little offender that hides in darkness. A considerable amount of time and labour which we expend on the outer things in the mistaken belief that it is they that are responsible for our falls and failures,

¹ *Prayers and Meditations of The Mother*

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can thus be saved, and many an unpleasant consequence avoided or obviated.

When we look at the difficulties of life from this standpoint, we realise the extreme importance and utility of action in spiritual life. Action rouses all the elements and energies of our nature and confronts them with those of others. In this interlocking of diverse forces, colliding and coalescing with each other, we get an opportunity, otherwise unavailable, of studying not only the main trends and tendencies of our own nature, its major movements and vibrations, its dominant desires and attachments and preferences, but even the little twists and turns, the hidden sores or passing quivers which, though they elude a superficial observation, are yet prolific sources of disharmony and disruption. It is, thanks to Yogic action, that all these forces and elements of our nature are exposed to our view and made amenable to change and correction.

But usually we twist away from the truth and blame others or our circumstances and surroundings for the defeats and chagrins we experience in life. We do not have the courage to trace their sources in us, to realise that they are pointers to some defects and drawbacks lurking or latent in our being, which have to be discovered and removed, in order that we may advance towards our goal of an integral union and communion with the Divine. "Even if we were to travel across the whole earth, bury ourselves in some solitary place, break with all our habits, lead the most ascetic life, still if some bond of illusion held back the consciousness far from Thy absolute Consciousness, if some egoistic attachment deprived us of the integral communion with Thy divine Love, we should be no nearer to Thee, whatever might be the outer circumstances." It is spiritually harmful to quarrel with persons or worry over circumstances. On the contrary, it is not unoften the unfavourable circumstances that stimulate the divine qualities in us and promote our spiritual progress; and we can also say that what we know as favourable or congenial circumstances prove often positively detrimental by their anaesthetic effect upon our creative energies and evolving faculties.

The truth of the matter is that the outer conditions and circumstances play a very insignificant, almost a negligible role in the spiritual advancement of our being. What is important is the inner purification—the freedom from desire and attachment, from cares and unrest and falsehood and egoism. And what is still more important than this, is the single-minded aspiration for the Divine and a perfect self-dedication to His Will. This is the positive aspect of Yoga which has always to be stressed and not lost sight of

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in the rush and tumult of the lower forces. A sincere aspiration and surrender usually bring in their wake a light which is not of the mind and a subtle guidance which is not of our moral conscience; and then it becomes much easier to detect in us the difficulties and obstacles which hamper and hinder our progress. And once we detect and reject them, we find that the subjective self-discipline amply justifies itself by a definite change in the objective self-expression of our nature. The difficulties and obstacles which had cast a menacing gloom over our life disappear, as if by a miracle, confirming our trust in the Mother's words, "If you keep your faith unshaken and your heart always open to me, then all difficulties, however great, will contribute to the greater perfection of the being."¹ In regard to the difficulties we encounter in work, the Mother says, "The difficulties in work come from circumstances or outer petty occurrences, they come from something in the inner attitude (especially in the vital attitude) which is wrong,—egoism, ambition, fixity of the mental conceptions regarding work, etc., etc. And it is always better to look for the cause of the disharmony, in order to correct it, in oneself rather than in the other or others."² If we learn to step back and look within, instead of fretting and worrying, each time there is an opposition or confusion in the outer circumstances of our life, we gain not only in endurance and equality, which are the very basis and condition of self-mastery, but in the inner power to straighten and solve the outer problems; and the greatest gain is first the awareness and then the elimination of whatever in us has occasioned or reacted to the circumstances. "Always circumstances come to reveal the hidden weaknesses that have to be overcome."³

But when we identify ourselves with the universal and the transcendent Spirit, nothing is perceived as outside of us; the forces of light and the forces of darkness, the factors that help and the factors that hinder, the goodwill and sympathy of friends and the rancour and resistance of enemies, our own blemishes and the blemishes of others—all are seen within us, and not without; all have to be dealt with, in the way the inner light indicates, within us, and not without. It is this that the Mother means when she says to the Divine, "(I) await from Thee the inspiration and strength needed to set right the error in me and around me,—two things that are

¹ *Words of the Mother*

² *ibid.*

³ *ibid.*

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one; for I have now a constant and precise perception of the universal unity determining an absolute interdependence of all action.”¹ A comprehensive consciousness embraces all, feels itself in all, grapples with the forces and problems of life, individual and collective, with the clairvoyant intimacy of identity. This is the typical spiritual seeing of which the Upanishads speak—the seeing from the inside out, from the core to the crust, from reality to phenomena, from the absolute to the relative, from Truth to its manifold, evolving self-expression. In this seeing in dynamic identity inheres the power of not only purifying, but transfiguring life and achieving divine mastery.

But whatever the nature of the mastery we aim at, self-mastery or world-mastery, the problem of the spiritual life is the problem of inner exploration and inner conquest. The truth of things floats not on the surface, but rays out from the depths; and a complete union and communion with the Divine can only be the result of a perfect perfection in self-mastery achieved by a scrupulous self-analysis and a relentless elimination of the difficulties and obstacles that our ignorant desires and attachments invite and harbour in us. And for this victorious self-mastery or all-mastery, Yogic action is the indispensable means. A passive, ascetic spirituality leaves the world and life much as they have always been—it seeks its crown elsewhere than on earth.

RISHABHCHAND

¹ *Prayers and Meditations of the Mother*

THE SPIRITUAL BASIS OF PERSONALITY*

III

SINCE the phenomenal world as we see it is really the appearance of the Divine Nature, which it has chosen to assume in order to manifest its Purity and Perfection through that which masks its Truth most completely, we realise that our seeing only the surface obscurity results from a limitation in our own outlook, and particularly in our present instrumentation of knowing based as it is on the senses and the sense-mind. It is for this reason that whereas the true Nature of things is a unity and a wholeness, we normally see only a partial picture of Reality,—a divided, disparate world. We encounter the surface conflict and clash of opposites, and fail to recognise their inter-related working and hidden connections.

Perceiving the outward relation between man and the world we see that his present instruments of knowing have arisen from and developed out of the animal nature,—a world of instincts and pure sensory awareness. Looking inwards however, into the subliminal nature, man sees there something which does not belong to the animal world, and which even surpasses and transcends all human attributes,—something of the spiritual or divine Nature itself. It is these two aspects—the inner and the outer—which separately appear to give a double nature to man,—half-animal, half-divine. Man thus seems to be a permanent immiscibility of a gross lower nature and a more subtle higher Nature; and it is the latter which is largely overlaid and obscured by the outward grosser parts. In his highest endeavour, therefore, man strives to purify himself of this lower nature, and even to purge and rid himself of it,—though this latter operation inevitably results in divorcing him from the whole activity and current of life. With this seemingly twofold nature man appears to be the completely divided being,—as symbolised in the Biblical story of the “fall” of man. Adam, being the Primal Man, still

* Based on *The Life Divine*

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possessed and held the higher Nature at first, as a consistent whole,—since he was as yet the pure stuff of God,—and in an integral harmony with the lower creation. It is only when he has actually partaken of the fruit of discord and division, that he falls completely into the snare of the lower nature. His higher Self is then separated from him, as though by a veil, and he becomes wholly enmeshed in the sorrow, death and evil of the world. Henceforth that Perfection which had once been his as a conscious possession, becomes but an ideal, an ever-recurring dream, which intermittently stirs him, amidst the distractions of a worldly life, to recover once more those pristine heights. This endeavour however, is not merely a matter of casting off again the lower nature which he has thus accepted. For man has embraced that which has emerged from the lower levels of creation, precisely to discover and to be the very medium of manifestation of a higher Nature. And this he can only do by transformation; that is, by transmuting the separated layers of his present nature into a consistent compound, a wholeness of being, in which the division of higher and lower, gross and subtle, fleshly and spiritual have become unified. This means the development of his soul-nature—the true unifying centre of his being—as the dominant and guiding principle of his life. Only through that spiritual entity can he completely recover a true unified consciousness and hence bring the transforming Power and Light of the Divine Nature into the world. But the recovery and proper development of the soul-nature requires a full knowledge and consciousness, in order to pursue the right course of action. In other words, he needs the light of a higher knowledge to find his way out of the darkness of ignorance into the luminous realm of Truth. And reciprocally, it is only his soul that can fully retain and correctly utilise that higher Light and Truth, which is the very stuff and matrix of its being. It is that higher knowledge therefore, in unifying and reconciling man's scattered fragments of knowing, and revealing even opposites as integral parts of one Whole, that is the first step. Only by that can man begin to transform the division of his present outlook into the true integral unity of the Divine.

By thus identifying himself with the harmony of the totality, through a progressive knowledge, man comes to realise all too readily that the condition of his present consciousness, though of practical importance in his actual day-to-day dealings with life, does not reach the ultimate possibilities of his total awareness. Yet he clings passionately to his present human nature, with all its imperfections and limitations; but this is only because he is reluctant

to lessen his grasp on it until he is convinced that a higher Nature can actually be cast into the mould of his present earth life. Also, by this tight-gripped retention on the lower nature, he has come to believe that this latter represents his permanent lot and destiny—at least in this worldly life. So only by death can he sever himself from it, and be liberated into some spiritual sphere beyond, where his pure soul-nature rid of the animal grossness can enjoy the bliss and felicity, the expansiveness and the untrammelled beatitude native to its own expression. This liberation, however, does not fulfil the purpose of his material birth. For this life is no transient, phenomenal or chance existence with some permanent state of bliss and freedom beyond. It is here and now that man must bring out and establish the divine Nature in all its variegated plenitude.

Nor does present-day physical science offer us a consistent picture of the universe; for while purporting to be the objective reality—at least of the material field—it is wholly different from and alien to our ordinary subjective view of the world. In the artistic sphere also we are presented with yet another aspect of reality, —a more subtle and perhaps higher range of seeing. These, and other modes of experience, convince us that there are far deeper and wider vistas of Reality open to man than can be realised from his ordinary sense-bound outlook. And these indicate the possibilities of a higher knowledge, through which eventually the whole Reality can be comprehended. It is such wider experiences which together really form the essential basis and steps of man's higher development; and to attempt to enlarge the consciousness without first establishing these as our primary means and channel of attainment would be both dangerous and futile. For without this firm foundation one would be inevitably precipitated into the unknown and uncharted waters of the occult and the spiritual with neither guide nor direction-finder. In reaching for a wider consciousness it is thus important to retain one's hold on the practical values of one's present order of awareness, even with all its faults and aberrations. It is after all our chief existing link with life and the world, and if we prematurely sever this channel in our zealous pursuit of some wider cosmic or transcendent consciousness, we cannot then adequately relate our new vision to the realities of things around. All too frequently in the past it had been the tendency to act on this belief,—that a plunge into the spiritual life and the pursuit of God-consciousness meant a severance and release from this lower order of ignorance, and with it a disconnection from the sensory

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faculties which thus keep us attached to the lower nature. But it is in fact the practical application of that wider Consciousness to the present life and existence of the world which is the ultimate aim of spiritual knowledge; and for this to be accomplished we must necessarily utilise these limited instruments of knowing, at least until more perfected faculties have sufficiently developed to control and guide man's advancement. With the acquisition of a higher knowledge, and especially the development of the discriminative faculty, the mind and senses are gradually purified, and their discernment clarified. This clarification of mind is an important stage in our first approach to spiritual knowledge. We can then discriminate more clearly and precisely between Truth and untruth, and what for man is Divine and what is non-divine; for there are many illusions, suggestions and false lights which come to draw us constantly from our rightful course.

It is noteworthy to observe that one of the principal admissions that modern science has had to make is the fact that the senses are unreliable, or at the best merely relative. But this does not mean that both the scientific picture of the world and that presented by our sensory faculties cannot be each a partial aspect, bearing a practical import, of the totality. In the development of science it is clear that the sense-mind has first collected and co-ordinated its sensory data, and that the analytical mind piecing together the information thus received from observation and experiment, has produced a more or less fundamental structural detail of the physical world and its working. This, however, is far from being a complete knowledge, as science now admits; and even by this admission it is beginning to probe into new fields of experience. But unfortunately man himself is as yet reluctant to admit in the same way the limitation of his own faculties of knowing. And it is in fact this latter limitation which is really hampering the wider advancement of science.

The fundamental importance of science lies essentially in its utilisation of knowledge,—that is, the endeavour to bring its findings into a practical relation with life. It is thus primarily a means—though at present a restricted one—towards man's higher advancement and greater achievement. In this respect we can compare the scientific approach with the artistic vision and creative effort. For whereas the latter strives to reach some image or idealisation of Truth, the former aims to externalise its discoveries and bring them into a materialised form. Thus art endeavours to raise man into the realm of the higher ideals, chiefly of Truth and Beauty, and to elevate his sensibilities and aesthetic appreciation. Science, on the other

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hand, attempts to convert its discoveries into realisable values which can be readily handled by man. Science, therefore, is not so much concerned with the advancement of man himself as with the conversion of Truth into utilisable terms. Under the aegis of science man is thus expected to broaden his horizon only through the rich store of practical knowledge which it brings to him. But, it may be asked, how can science itself advance if man, the very instrument of its searching, remains fixed and static? It is because of this one-sided result that the present fixation has arisen in modern thought; and this will be inevitable while ever science merely strains to enlarge its instruments of discernment without at the same time elevating the consciousness which eventually has to utilise those instruments. But there is not only the deadlock in the experimental and observational field, there is also the present split in the theoretical sphere of scientific knowledge itself. For by means of reason and deduction science has advanced so far beyond man's sensory limits that its present-day findings appear to oppose the latter, and thus reason has true cause to regard the senses as erroneous and faulty. The dilemma of modern science, therefore, is to translate its new findings into a more convincing experience of them,—not only to make them comprehensible, but also to determine whether they really do come within the field of actuality or are merely hypothetical speculations, or are perhaps a mixture of both. This, of course, can only be resolved by the development in man himself of a wider awareness and a broader range of perception.

It is in such a way that all the diverse and disconnected strands of experience which make up man's present state of knowledge, can come to be seen in their true perspective, both in relation to the wider cosmic Whole, and to the yet greater infinite supra-cosmic Vastness. Since it is clear that present-day science cannot advance very far without endangering the whole terrestrial field of life, it is even more imperative for man to establish in himself the firm basis of a wider unitive knowledge, which will give him the clearer insight to discern the goal and direction his endeavours must now take. And this in fact means spiritual knowledge and spiritual awareness which, proceeding from the very centre of his being, aims first to enlarge the consciousness, so that the whole and not a partial truth can be realised and encompassed. It is for this reason—its inner centredness—that spiritual knowledge is the real root of man's knowing and the basic factor of his integral development. Unlike science and art—both of which evade the primary need of first changing man himself by enlarging inwardly

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his present faculties of awareness—spirituality proceeds from the innermost centre of man, extending from there to embrace the whole of his being, and yet beyond until it encompasses the entire Reality. In this way man himself comes to contain and grasp the Wholeness as a living possession of his being. It is on this integral foundation that the whole of man's knowledge,—his science and art as well as his religion and philosophy—can find their own true bearings, and each in its own way assist in the unification and integration of man's life—instead of, as at present, aiding its disruption.

We have observed that the present consciousness of man is characterised by division and separation, but it is yet to be seen how the ego had become the chief centre and instrument of this dividing action. Because the ego had evolved into the all-dominant centre of man's being, it is naturally stubbornly reluctant to admit that for his future advancement it is essential that it accepts a subordinate function. It is this difficulty which comes sharply into focus particularly at this critical juncture of man's development, when the soul-seed of his being is struggling to emerge as the true unifying and naturally co-ordinating centre. Furthermore, we can see that the ego labours under the delusion that without its dominant guidance and control no concerted action can take place, and that the personality would therefore disintegrate and cease to exist as a distinct self in the world. In other words, the ego rests on its claim to be the all-important "I" and the real self of man. It is only by our opening to a higher knowledge—a knowledge transcending the grasp of the ego—that we realise the true self to be the soul-entity. And it is this potentially greater centre—as yet enclosed seed-like in man—to which the ego itself must turn, and ultimately serve. In this way a progressive widening of the mind, and a grasping of the truths that are above and beyond the ego's domain, lead to the realisation that the final destiny of this lower action-centre is not to remain permanently as the all-powerful principle of the being, which has imposed itself as the chief director and indispensable factor around which man's world must necessarily revolve. One becomes conscious of a greater potentiality within, which is in fact closer to the supreme Source and Origin of things,—the true centre of man's existence. It is not the ego therefore, that is the real delegate and direct instrument of man's higher advancement, but the inner soul. For it is the soul which convinces him by direct contact that the centre of the world is not the spurious "I" but that Supreme Origin, which though infinitely beyond man and the world, is yet at the same time not only

inseparably attached to the world, but also to that innermost centre of his being.

It is in this egoistic stage of man's development, however, that all his reasoning and intellectual powers have been built up; and largely by means of Reason man has been able to erect his present store of knowledge. But valuable as Reason is, we can see that this knowledge is fundamentally dominated by the ego-centre, which has utilised the power of Reason for its own protection and aggrandisement. Reason has thus come to support and justify the narrow viewpoint of the ego, so that everything which imperils the superiority of the latter is rejected as illogical or untenable. It is in this way that the ideal of a divine life on earth, with its consequent transformation of human nature, and the supplanting of the ego itself by a new centre of authority, is vigorously repulsed by Reason as being an impossible attainment—at least in this terrestrial life. Human nature, it argues, cannot be changed so completely and radically. Hence the conception of an ideal state of Perfection is merely assigned to some sphere or heaven beyond this earthly life.

Pure Reason, as a power in itself apart from the ego-function, has the lofty aim of pursuing Knowledge and Truth by means of the elimination of error. An absolute and ever-existent Truth is the ideal towards which Reason more naturally strives. But without the harmonised inter-relationship of the whole being Reason has come to institute its own law of operation as the sovereign principle of man's knowing. It has thus produced a one-sided effort, through which those other ideals of Beauty, Faith and Goodness—which largely support man's art, religion and morality—have been systematically rejected, and considered as only secondary to his progressive thought, and even irrelevant to the pure Truth itself. Moreover, these latter ideals, belonging as they do to man's emotive nature, are more of spontaneous feeling and expression beyond the grasp of the precise and logical step-by-step procedure of Reason. Firmly fixed in the view that Truth can only be reached by mental thought, it is suspicious of the validity of other than thought-inspired expression. By its clear-cut logical method it sets out to elucidate whatever aspect of Truth comes within its scope of direct analysis. The overstepping into the realm of the mysterious, or a plunge into the waters of the noumenal are always anathema to the reasoning faculty, unless there is already some comprehensive bridge to reach these unknown regions. It is clear, therefore, that Reason is not by any means all-embracing in its method of approach,

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but is in fact selective; for many aspects of Reality are rejected by it merely because they lie outside its sphere of argument of narrow proof-by-exclusion process. Its natural method is that of "either-or",—which does not seek to discover the common ground of compatibility whereby opposites and differences may possibly be unified. We can see, however, that all this narrow exclusion and rigid elimination is due largely to the utilisation of Reason by the all-dominant ego-centre, so that any attempt by the former to probe into the deeper causes or fundamental root of things is rigorously suppressed. But Reason has a higher rôle and function. As the instrument of the more comprehensive faculty of soul, Reason can open up a clear and decisive avenue through which our present mental apprehension could reach and grasp the greater Truths beyond.

Within the multiplicity of the whole cosmic movement we have seen that the individual ego has emerged, via the terrestrial evolution, as a centralised instrument of action. But it is equally clear that it is yet the centre of an inferior co-ordination—integrating that which is below itself in the lower Nature. It has thus established a partial unity, which is but a stage towards the full integral unity of the individual being. It is this partialisation which has kept man tied to the ignorance of the lower nature, and exclusively attached to the limited sensory faculties. In this way the ego has been able to maintain its predominance as the centre of a divided consciousness, effectively shutting out the Truth and Light of a higher Nature beyond; for its very existence as the dominant factor in man has depended on preserving this division. By this separation also, the ego has been able to attain a complete control over all the activities and motives of man,—and has thus falsely become the prime mover, the doer and the supreme "I" of his existence. Only beyond this narrow mental centre, therefore, can man begin to participate in the consciousness of the totality, and even beyond this in the consciousness of the Transcendence, on which the totality itself depends.

Although the ancient Vedanta had clearly indicated that the cosmic source of the deformation of the ego could be traced to its being rooted in the lower Nature, it was later derivative schools of thought which distorted this original truth. In these philosophies, which unfortunately overshadowed the original Upanishadic teaching, the ego came to be regarded not only as the root of the duality in the world—and therefore its outlook a false representation of the pristine Truth,—but also as the very cause and creator of this illusory universal Nature. In other words, it was the ego which held man attached to an illusion—the cosmos—which was itself an imperfection

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and deformation of the pure Transcendent Reality. Logically therefore the highest achievement for man would be to cut himself off finally from the chains of ego, and thus attain eternal liberation in the untrammelled Beyond. It was this idea which became current, turning a positive truth into a world-negating ideal. By thus eliminating the ego, it is clear that at the same time we cut off our own existence from the cosmic movement. The ego in spite of its attachment to the ignorance, is but the temporary centre of man's being—a narrow, exclusive and ultra self-conscious unity of the individual, and is a step towards that wider universal unity culminating in the all-embracing realisation of the Divine. It is by this larger progression, therefore, that the ego becomes a subordinate integer of a yet greater Wholeness,—which unifies the lower nature of man in order to serve a higher Will and Law. When the Divine becomes the centre of our seeing, we find the true co-ordination and harmony of all that was hitherto disparate and conflicting. By this extra-egoistic relation we become aware of the true identity between the innermost self and the Conscious Being of the Divine Nature. And since that Conscious Being had, through a serial descent become the infinite entities constituting material forms and thence had emerged through life and the lower levels of mind into some half figure of Consciousness, we are forced to concede that the further steps beyond mind have yet to be made. The very limitation of mind and the constrictions imposed by its ego-centre indicate clearly enough that these are but partial formations of an all-embracing Consciousness. The complete emergence can only come through the fully perfected and integrated Being of the Divine Nature, the seed of which, implanted in man as his innermost soul, is now struggling towards some measure of that greater manifestation.

Thus it can be realised that the ego, though at first the primary integument of a unity, has not embraced the full integral complement of man's greater Wholeness. It is, in fact, the offspring and effective action-centre of Mind, and having taken possession of man, had become the basis and organised centre of his present divided being. By appropriating only the lower nature the ego had built around itself a natural field, in which it could readily become the dominant centre of the being. Thus man, restricted and apparently bound to a lower order of consciousness, had come to regard the immediate appearance as the true reality, and himself as being a separate and distinct entity from what seemed to be a vague unknown Beyond. The condition is therefore reached

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where man's attention is solely centred on the outer reality. He becomes oblivious of a higher Reality, so that even when this latter intrudes itself through the veil of separation, he sees it only as an unreality and an illusion. The key freeing him from this all-too fixed and rigid grip of the ego lies in his self-opening to the universal or cosmic truths, and beyond these to the divine Reality itself. Thus can the individual centralise his being outside and beyond the ego,—awakening the true unifying dynamis of his own being. And in this way the dualities of his present outlook can be composed into the true wholeness of an integral vision. Only through that complete unification can the Divine Transformation and Perfection be established in this earthly life.

NATHANIEL PEARSON

One should not attach too much importance to the life of the body. The body is only an incident in the progress of the soul. Evolution of the soul is the objective of Karmic existence. When one has realised the soul, knowledge and enlightenment come and all the problems are solved. But before that, one should try to get peace, calm and light.

SRI AUROBINDO

(To a correspondent from the Defence Forces)

THE MASTER'S COMPASSION

SIR ROBERT BRISTOW's article, "Sri Aurobindo, Mystic, Meta-physician, Poet," in a British journal, *The Modern Churchman*, is a striking indication of the steady but powerful and deep currents of spiritual light that are flowing out from Mother India and rousing the western world.

The whole of the article is a literary piece of high excellence and full of charm and verve and grips the reader with its compelling interest from the first page to the last. The intensity of the inspiration under which it has been written has invested it with clarity, speed and briskness and here and there we find passages which have a lyrical glow and a shining harvest of images. How deftly he has crystallised the global nature and the wide-sweep of Sri Aurobindo's *magnum opus*, 'The Life Divine', in the following passage:

"Thus reading *The Life Divine* is like the turning of globe wherein, rightly understood, is all there is to know and no part is greater or less than another, and all is one. But the image is complicated by the fact that the observer is also in a process of revolution; for his mind, if informed on the physical cosmos, must analogize his knowledge into a new language, or, if informed on the theological side, must recast his dogmas into new forms and patterns, and this, I dare say, will come unwillingly to many theologians, whereas the hopeful student of nature and life leaps to embrace the substance of Reality which he instinctively recognizes."

We may here point out that the substance of Reality is not recognized instinctively but psychically. It is when the word descends straight from its sun-realms and pierces with its light-blaze the veils that conceal the Indwelling Deity in us, that we awake to the sense of a dawning reality. It is the soul in us that leaps to embrace the substance of Reality, because it is itself an eternal portion of the Divine.

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But in the last section of this brilliant essay, Sir Robert has made certain remarks which are rather ill-reconciled with what has preceded it, and also verge on mis-statements. But, on the whole, he is to be congratulated for the warm understanding he has shown of Sri Aurobindo's gospel, for he goes so far as to venture the remark, 'Both he (Sri Aurobindo) and Jesus the Christ became God-conscious through mystical communion; both perceived that God Is, and that He is Infinite Divine Personality'.

His concluding remarks appear to us somewhat like a fly in the ointment and we cannot resist concluding that though he felt inspired by a perusal of *The Life Divine*, he stopped short with that, and did not steep himself with heart and soul in the Light and Love that flow in unceasing streams from the Divine Personality of Sri Aurobindo. We will not argue out the matter; for, the compassion of the Master is through and through a matter of inner feeling arising from a spiritual communion with him; but we will only focus the limelight on this aspect of his multi-sided personality and leave it to Sir Robert and others of his way of thinking to see the truth. Sir Robert concludes his article with these words:

"What one misses in Sri Aurobindo is the compassion of Jesus. If a non-swimmer has fallen overboard Jesus does not stand on the bridge and tell him to imitate the movements of a frog: He descends to save him. Jesus, the word full of grace and truth, was also the compassionate Friend who went about doing good, and could say more in a parable than Sri Aurobindo can pack in a philosophy. It is this ever-present assurance of comradeship in difficulty, of hope and strength, of saving love, that marks Jesus as the son of God and the Son of Man, and justifies His truest epitaph: 'I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me'. Nevertheless, Sri Aurobindo, the Mystic, Realist and Hindu Modernist, knowingly or not, has helped to unveil that Appealing Figure, and has so rendered possible a spiritual rapprochement between East and West which may and will have, sooner or later, incalculable consequences."

The upshot of the first few sentences is that Sri Aurobindo's help to the suffering humanity does not go beyond mere teaching and preaching and that his personality is something grand, aloof, cold and austere—devoid of all love and compassion; Jesus the Christ, on the other hand, was dripping with love for mankind and he came down, on this sordid earth, to save it and crucified himself for the atonement of man with God. We accept

without demur what he feels about Christ, but we ask, how can a non-believer verify all that Sir Robert thinks true of Christ's. Surely, those who never felt the call to live his message; nor, had any faith in him, could not have realized that he had descended to save them. Before taking into consideration the comradeship of Christ we may dismiss one source of misunderstanding. We hope, Sir Robert does not unnecessarily limit the help and friendship of Christ to a few instances of his short stay on earth such as curing the lepers; for, in that case, it has no value for posterity.

Surely, Christ's comradeship is something extra-temporal and extra-spatial and therefore something spiritual through and through. The historical Christ merely symbolises the eternal love of the Divine for the human soul and, the act of Divine descent and help and succour takes place primarily in the inner life of those who climb the steep and narrow path of Truth—for the simple reason that the path of Truth is a journey of the soul and not of the body. Hence they alone feel concretely, at every moment of spiritual crisis how, the secret hand of the Divine Master is helping them over a stile, guarding them against pitfalls, lightening their burdens of sin and sorrow. No one can form an adequate idea of the Light and Love that flow from a spiritual Master unless and until he girds up his loins to follow the trail blazed by him and, as a consequence, opens his heart and soul to the Master to receive them.

Even Jesus, 'the Friend who went about doing good', was not recognized as such by all and sundry. A snatch from his conversation with Judas (not Iscariot) will throw a most vivid light on the whole question. Judas asked him, "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world"? Jesus answered and said unto him, "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him". Christ's answer leaves not a shadow of doubt that (1) He manifests Himself only to those whom his spiritual contact has set aflame with an all-consuming passion for the summits of spiritual glory revealed by Him and, (2) that the manifestation takes place within the soul of the seeker and that this splendour is nothing physical and hence is refused to the earthward sight and only 'floods, some deep flame-covered eye'. It is in the inner sanctuary of his heart that the devotee will discover Jesus the Friend making his abode with him. The outer help has little value for the spiritual aspirant. Such miracles as healing the lepers or other diseased persons have no abiding truth or value in them and even when a cure of some physical ailment is brought about by a spiritual

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Master the healing power is not visible to those who have no psychic contact with him.

That, again, is the significance of His epitaph: 'I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me'. Indeed, this is the greatest help that a spiritual Master renders to the world—to blaze out paths, perfectly mapped, macadamised, and thus make the ascent safe and secure for other aspiring souls. Sri Aurobindo has very vividly and graphically described the unimaginable hardships he had to undergo in order to make the Supermind accessible to our tread. He writes, "As for the Mother and myself, we have had to try all ways, follow all methods, surmount mountains of difficulties, a far heavier burden to bear than you or anybody else in the Ashram or outside, far more difficult conditions, battles to fight, wounds to endure, ways to cleave through unpenetrable morass and desert and forest, hostile masses to conquer—a work such as, I am certain, none else had to do before us. For the leader of the way in a work like ours has not only to bring down or represent and embody the Divine, but to represent too the ascending element in humanity and to bear the burden of humanity to the full and experience, not in a mere play or Lila but in grim earnest, all obstruction, difficulty, opposition, baffled, hampered and only slowly victorious labour which are possible on the path."¹

But still for those who have never felt the call to pursue the sunlit path of Integral Yoga, all this remains a mystery and rings hollow in their ears, because the truth of these things cannot be verified by occasional excursions into spiritual literature. The Master's grace is there, but we must stretch our hands to receive it. Those who have burnt their boats at the call of Sri Aurobindo see most vividly how his sentinel love broods over the Universe. Dilip Kumar Roy concludes his poem 'Sri Aurobindo' with these lines:

Who once knows thy compassion, friend, has known
'Tis not a myth that Love is one with Light.

As a matter of fact, it is a contradiction in terms that a man should realize the Divine and yet be devoid of that Love which leans down to uplift humanity. According to Sri Aurobindo, a man who has liberated himself from 'the senses' narrow mesh, and the leaden rule of Nature consents here to a mortal body because of his compassion for the whole creation. After

¹*Letters of Sri Aurobindo—Second Series*

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describing the absolute, high-seated immortal rapture, with ecstasy everlasting that characterizes the life of the Jivanmukta Sri Aurobindo closes the poem with these two stanzas written in the loftiest vein of compassion:

Only to bring God's forces to waiting Nature,
To help with wide-winged Peace her tormented labour
And heal with joy her ancient sorrow,
Casting down light on the inconscient darkness,
He acts and lives. Vain things are mind's smaller motives
To one whose soul enjoys for its high possession
Infinity and the sempiternal
All is his guide and beloved and refuge.¹

This is the Love that radiates from a spiritual Master who is no mere social reformer or philanthropist. But, for the modern man it is rather difficult to expunge from his mind that the humanitarian ideals do not represent the *summum bonum*, and that is the main stumbling block in the way of appreciating and feeling the touch of divine compassion which is not pity that degrades the recipient, but, on the contrary, spiritual strength that uplifts him not only to his high status of manhood but to his Divinity and thus imbues him with true self-reliance. Describing the nature of divine compassion he writes, "This compassion observes with an eye of love and wisdom and calm strength the battle and the struggle, the strength and weakness of man, his virtues and sins, his joy and suffering, his knowledge and his ignorance, his wisdom and his folly, his aspiration and his failure and it enters into it all to help and to heal".²

In *The Life Divine* also he again and again lays emphasis on this aspect of a Spiritual Personality and has tried to show that it is the law of the life of the liberated soul to help others realize the same high status. He writes, "But the liberated soul extends its perception of unity horizontally as well as vertically. Therefore, whenever even a single soul is liberated, there is a tendency to an extension and even to an outburst of the same divine self-consciousness in other individual souls of our terrestrial humanity, and—who knows?—perhaps even beyond the terrestrial consciousness. Where shall we fix the limit of that extension? Is it altogether a legend which says of the

¹ Jivanmukta—*Collected Poems and Plays*, Vol. II

² *Essays on the Gita*, Vol. I, Chapter VII

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Buddha that as he stood on the threshold of Nirvana, of the Non-Being, his soul turned back and took the vow never to make the irrevocable crossing so long as there was a single being upon earth undelivered from the knot of the suffering, from the bondage of the ego"?¹ But a humanity that hugs the shore cannot recognize the hand of Divine Help when its cherished bonds are broken. Man, usually sees the helping hand only in that which perpetuates his bondage to ordinary passions and desires. This is why the Mother has said, "The Divine may very well lean down towards you but to understand him rightly you must climb up to him". This refusal, on the part of humanity, to climb up is the reason why,

Its thorns of fallen nature are the defence
It turns against the saviour hands of Grace,
It meets the sons of God with death and pain.²

Those who have some experience of the spiritual path—well-known as the razor's edge, *kshurasya dhara*—know fully well that the external difficulties of life pale into insignificance before the far more arduous task—requiring eternal and unremitting vigilance—of the complete inner purification and transformation of the whole consciousness. And, infinitely more difficult is the work of those Divine Masters who have to blaze the trail and to open the sun-realms of supernal seeing for a purblind humanity, for, theirs is a battle against universal forces of darkness and evil. Sri Aurobindo's poem, "A God's Labour", gives us some idea of the unending suffering of the Avatar who comes down to rescue the human race bogged in the slough of ignorance. In the end we cannot do better than quote the following lines of Sri Aurobindo from his epic poem *Savitri*, which incidentally justify Sir Robert's remark that Sri Aurobindo has helped to unveil the Appealing Figure of Christ:

He who would save himself lives bare and calm;
He who would save the race must bear its pain:.....
The Creator bears the law of pain and death;
A retribution smites the incarnate God.
By Man's hate he has redeemed his love of men,

The Life Divine, Vol. I, Chapter V

² *Savitri*, Book I, Canto I

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His love has paved the mortal's road to Heaven:
He has given his life and light to balance here
The dark account of mortal ignorance.

And again follows:

Yet when God's messenger comes to help and lead
The aspirant soul of earth to higher things,
He too must carry the yoke he came to unloose;
All earth's disquietude he must make his.
Exempt and unafflicted by earth's fate,
How shall he heal the ills he never felt?
Although to the outward eye is shown no sign
Yet is the struggle there, the unseen price;
The fire, the strife, the wrestle are within.
He carries the suffering world in his own breast;
Its sin weighs on his thoughts, its grief is his:
The Titan adversary's clutch is felt:
Earth's old grey load lies heavy on his soul;
His march is a battle and a pilgrimage.
Night and its powers beleaguer his tardy steps
And smite him with life's evil and the world's pain:
A million wounds gape in his secret heart.
A titan warfare is his inner life.
Even worse may be the cost of direct pain
Before the afflicting Power will loose its hold.
His large identity and all-harboursing love
May bring the cosmic anguish into his depths,
The sorrow of all living things shall come
To knock at his doors and live within his house,
A dreadful cord of sympathy has tied
All suffering into his single grief; it has made
All agony in all the worlds his own.¹

In another letter² he writes, "It is only divine Love which can bear the burden I have to bear, that all have to bear who have sacrificed everything

¹ *Savitri*, The Book of Fate, Canto 2.

² *Letters of Sri Aurobindo*—Second Series.

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else to the one aim of uplifting earth out of its darkness towards the Divine. The Gallio-like "Je m'en fiche"-ism(I do not care)—would not carry me one step; it would certainly not be divine. It is quite another thing that enables me to walk unweeping and unlamenting towards the goal."¹

RAVINDRA NATH KHANNA

I have always laid a dominant stress and I now lay an entire stress on the spiritual life, but my idea of spirituality has nothing to do with ascetic withdrawal or contempt or disgust of secular things. There is to me nothing secular, all human activity is for me a thing to be included in a complete spiritual life...

Jan. 1920

SRI AUROBINDO

*Sādhana Sāmrājyam**

SOVEREIGN SWAY OF SADHANA

1. That alone is all this that is commenced, visible and invisible, mobile and immobile, say the *seers* of the Scriptures. Of this world when was the beginning, where the end is, whence and wherein has it thus come to light—who knows that is born (of man)?¹

The wherefore and the whereat of the world around is a perennial question that confronts the awakened human intelligence. What is this world? Is it a reality or is it a fantastic dream of some superhuman gigantic Mind? Of what is it made, if made it has been?

The seers of the scriptures have answered this question with one voice. The seers are those who *see* the truth and give expression to it; they do not think it out; theirs are not the conclusions of intellectual reasonings regarding the possibilities of truth but perceptions of it. The Agama is an authentic utterance and originally stood for the entire literature invested with the imprimatur of authority and included the Vedas as well as the Tantra Shastra. Now, these scriptures which are recorded expressions of the seeings of the seers declare that all this creation is the Supreme Reality itself—the Reality has been designated by the term *Tat* in the Vedas and the Upanishads, *tad ekam, tad brahma*. The Reality does not lend itself to definitions that limit in the very act of defining and hence has been cryptically

* Sanskrit verses of Sri T. V. Kapali Sastry, translated into English with annotation by M. P. Pandit.

¹ तदेवेदं दृश्यं प्रकृतमथवाऽदृश्यमपि यत्
समस्तं सम्प्राहुश्चरमचरमप्यागमदृशः ।
कदासीदारम्भः परिणतिरपि क्वाऽस्य जगतः
कुतः कस्मिन्नेवं प्रथितमिह को वेद जनिमान् ॥ १ ॥

designated as the That, *tat*. This creation is That. And creation is not merely the world that we see. There is not only the physical world which strikes the eye and the senses; there are behind and above it the world of thoughts, the world of feelings, and many more worlds not visible to the outward eye but certainly accessible to other faculties in man under appropriate conditions. Again, creation does not consist of mobile formations alone, it includes *achara*, the immobile also. Not only sentient and moving but all that is apparently insentient and immobile. We say 'apparently' because even the plant-kingdom which was commonly supposed to be devoid of life has been demonstrated by modern Science to be instinct with some life, thus confirming the perception of the ages-old statement of the Mahabharata or Manu that they have pain and pleasure and are inwardly conscious, *antah sanjnā bhavantyete sukha-duhkha-samanvitāh*. The creation in question is the present one that has begun and is progressing, *prakrita*, 'that is commenced'. Prakrita has many meanings in Sanskrit, but the one apposite in this context is 'this that has commenced'. It means the present creation and not a creation of any past cycle. For, according to both ancient and modern theories, Creation has proceeded in cycles and the creation of which we are a part is by no means the only one; it is the latest.

Granted that what the seers say is so, the human mind proceeds to ask: when was its beginning? At what point of Time did creation start? How old is our world? And where is the end towards which it moves? Is the end here or elsewhere? Is it in calculable time or in some remote future? Where was it before it appeared? What is the location of its pre-natal existence? And what is the nature of its extension? In what has it thus spread itself? No one born of the mother's womb (*janīman*), no mortal really knows answers to these questions. Not that it is impossible for man to gain solution to this riddle of existence; it simply means that the human mind, constituted as it is, is not capable of finding the full answer. It is the limitations of the mind that stand in the way of its finding a satisfactory answer to the question. More of it later on.

2. The Agent of the world's rise and fall and stay is Shiva with the Mother (Shakti), Hari with Sri (his consort), the Supreme Brahman with Sat-chit-ananda Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, for body—thus they say (variously). Let that Lord, the Supreme Self, be with Maya or with no

Maya; but how does he start this world, void of meaning (futile), again and again?¹

That this world is a willed creation of the Lord is a fundamental postulate of all theistic religions. It has not come to be out of a fortuitous Chance, nor does it continue by a mechanical necessity till it disappears into the womb of time. It owes its birth, sustenance and dissolution to the supreme Creator who is called by different names according to the preference of the particular religious approach. Thus according to the adherents of the Shaiva religion, it is Shiva the Lord who is the agent of the birth of this world, not indeed alone but along with his consort the Mother, who is his Shakti. It is a basic tenet with Indian tradition, based upon an occult truth of primary nature, that no creation or manifestation is possible for the Lord, the Purusha, without his Shakti, the Executive Power, who receives the truth and substance of what is to be manifested from the Lord Purusha and proceeds to work out its expression backed by him. It is to be noted, however, that though from the standpoint of the uplooking intelligence, the Purusha and the Shakti are two different entities, from the higher and ultimately the truer standpoint on their own level, both are one, a biune presentation of the same Truth. "Both the Lord and Shakti are the same Supreme Truth, but form a biune presentation of the Divine Being in the urge for Self-manifestation. In His Omnipotence with His eye turned towards Creation, He *sees* and finds His Manifestation in Her; whatever is manifested is His self-expression in Her; therefore to Him All is She. She, the Ishwari on Her side, holds in Her immensity the Creative Spirit, the Lord in His expressive poise and in Her All-conscious Power, She is filled with His Being; therefore to Her All is He. Thus is there a mutuality in their relation which recognises their absolute identity in the Supreme, while in the Creation and for it One is the complement to the Other. She holds and manifests Something of Him. With a stress on His expressive ray His gaze is held in Her and All to Him is His own manifestation worked out by Her; She manifests, He is manifested. Without Her

¹ शिवस्साम्बः श्रीमान् हरिरिति च सच्चित्सुखवपुः

परं ब्रह्मेत्याहुर्जगदुदयभङ्गस्थितिकरम् ।

अमायी मायी वा भवतु परमात्मा स भगवान्

कथं भूयो भूयो जगदिदमनर्थं प्रकुरुताम् ॥ २ ॥

there is no manifestation, without Him She has no existence. If to Him All is She, if to Her All is He, to the awakened human soul He is She and She is He.” (*Lights on the Teachings* by Sri Kapali Sastry)

Thus it is Shiva with his Shakti, known as Uma or Parvati who is the Agent. Or, in the Vaishnavic tradition, it is Hari with Sri, Lakshmi. Or it is the supreme Brahman the triple Sat-chit-ananda—the very first poise and formulation of the Highest in its look towards manifestation, the source and substance and body of all, in the language of the Upanishads. Thus, it is the Lord who creates through the instrumentality of the Shakti which is called Maya by the Vedic mystics. Maya meant something which measures out, *mimite*, as indeed it measures out the limitless and measureless from the substance of the body of the Lord. And in that sense it excels in skill, in cunning, in bringing out a manifestation that is limited out of a source and background that is limitless, finite out of the infinite. The Svetasvetara Upanishad unequivocally calls Maya the Prakriti of the Lord, *māyām tu prakritim vidyāt, māyinam tu maheshwaram*. It was a later development in the philosophical thought of the country that this Shakti, Maya came to be completely equated in the Vedanta with the feature of cunningness and wholly invested with the property of causing illusion. Be that as it may, whether the Lord creates consorted by his Maya or creates all by himself, naturally a question arises: why does he create this world again and again? For to create presupposes a purpose, an issue. Nobody creates or works for anything without a definite purpose. The worlds rise and fall in a continuous procession; there does not seem to be any aim at all. That being so, why does he persist in creating again and again? Is there any set purpose behind the creation? Or is it that the Lord creates out of sheer helplessness compelled by something within or without himself? Or is it all a sport, a play with which he amuses himself?

3. If neither in play nor not in play with the world's birth, duration and death the Atman, the Self stays aloof, is there then no difference between the insentient and sentient? If finding joy in the world-play he releases (creates) even as he breaks, does the Lord come down like a child for an act that is vain?¹

¹ न खेलन् नाखेलन् भुवनभवनस्थेमविलयै-
रुदास्ते यद्यात्मा किमु जडचितोस्तर्हि न भिदा ।

Not so, say some Vedantins. He, the Self, the Atman of the creation does not play, he is not involved in it. Adapting the position taken up by the Sankhyas and equating the Purusha with the Atman they hold that the Atman does not participate in the movement of the universe which is being worked out by the Prakriti. The Atman simply watches from his set locus the diverse activities manifested by her. He does not play, if play it can be called. But the Atman cannot be divested of any part whatsoever in the act. For the Prakriti gets moving and effecting only at the express assent of the Purusha and goes on acting and doing under the observing eye of him. The act of observation, while it is not tantamount to active identification, is itself the impelling urge; for once the Purusha withdraws his observing eye, activity flags and Prakriti ceases to function for long. Thus this original assent and subsequent observation-participation precludes any complete dissociation with the play of creation on the part of the Self. So, the Self is neither in the play nor out of it: its position is one of aloofness, of indifference. If in fact such is the nature of the Self of the world, a question arises: what then is the difference between a sentient thing, such as the Atman is understood to be and the insentient? For the insentient is absolutely aloof from active participation in the life around. It stands all contacts and absence of contacts with a severe aloofness, indifference. If such also is the nature of the Atman, whom we are taught to believe as the very source of sentience, consciousness, then verily there could be no distinction between the two.

Or perhaps, it may be urged that the Lord takes delight in this play, *lila*, of the birth, duration and death of the world. He creates out of his own being, creates in delight and for the delight of a completer enjoyment of his own power. He takes equal delight in bringing the world to light, in maintaining it and in withdrawing it when it pleases him. Even when he breaks it up, he creates another out of his limitless possibilities. The entire creation is a Brindavan of Lord Krishna. That is the faith of certain religious teachings. The mind understands this viewpoint to a certain extent but refuses to believe that such tremendous labour as the creation, sustenance and dissolution of the universe involves would be undertaken just for the joy of it without any pragmatic consideration. The only analogy it can find

जगत्क्रीडारामो विसृजति हरन्नेवमिति चे-

स्मिरथे किं कार्ये प्रभुरवतरेदर्भक इव ॥ ३ ॥

ŚADHANA SAMRAJYAM

is the activity of an infant who is ever busy making and breaking things with no aim except the amusement he derives from it. Would the all-knowing supreme Lord really come down and engage himself like a child in this gigantic activity which has no aim?

4. If He is the One and Full and there is nothing else, how then does the Many confront (us) all around? If his knowledge is indivisible (infinite) and nothing from him comes to be that is unaware, how are we to speak of this world that is matter in motion, highly blind?¹

The Vedantin holds that the Supreme is One. All is He. He is Full, *purna*, he contains everything in himself; there is nothing outside of him, for to him there is no outside and inside; all is his extension. There is one Reality and all is reducible to that One. If this Oneness and entireness are the inseparable attributes of Him, how does it come about, asks the human mind, that we see around us so many differences and differing formations? How do the Many characterise the creation which is said to be the One Brahman *sarvam khalu idam brahma*? The Many is the antithesis of the One and both cannot exist side by side. Yet, the Many is a fact, much more verifiable and patent to man than the Unity of the One. Pluralism carries with it a more convincing certitude than does Monism to the common mind. Or could it be that the Supreme is not really full and it excludes the Many from its being? Again it is held that His knowledge is indivisible. His is a Consciousness that is one and infinite. It comprehends all that exists. It is all-knowing. If that were so, necessarily all that comes to be from him, all that is manifested out of him ought to partake of this nature of his consciousness since consciousness is indivisible and every bit that proceeds from the Being has inherent in itself this consciousness which is self-aware. But the facts do not seem to correspond to this proposition. For the world in which we live and move is one vast mass in motion. Knowledge and awareness are the least part of its features. Organised as it is in physical matter, which is utterly devoid of self-awareness, it is constantly in a somnambulist whirl,

¹ स एकः सम्पूर्णो न भवति ततो ऽन्यत् किमपि चेत्
कथं नानाभावः पुरत उपतिष्ठेच्च परितः ।
अखण्डब्रह्मोऽसौ न भवति ततोऽजं किमपि चेत्
कथञ्कारं ब्रूमो जडगति महान्धं जगदिदम् ॥ ४ ॥

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moving towards where it knows not. It acts as one blind. The Energy which is the driving force behind is a mechanical, unintelligent something and it is this that has impressed itself on the major part of the creation and not the characteristic of self-awareness and knowledge which is the inalienable mark of the Infinite Consciousness-Being from which it is deduced to have manifested. Not knowledge but ignorance, not Idealism but the Mechanical Laws of Necessity would thus seem to govern the existence of this world.

5. If the Sole Lord of the beings, the author of the world's birth, has himself with his boundless knowledge and joy become the All, how then does delusion, how does grief get space in the mighty Lord's Being that is formless, indivisible, impenetrable?¹

If it is maintained that the Supreme Lord of all beings and the creator of the worlds is not an extra-cosmic Deity but is himself all this, has created all this out of this own boundless existence, in a word, is immanent in it, there is another difficulty. The Becoming must necessarily partake of the nature of the Being of which it is but a particular movement. The Supreme Being is intense consciousness, is limitless knowledge, is boundless delight. But do we find these everywhere in creation which is said to be a form of the same Being? We do not. On the other hand, what we find is delusion mostly instead of knowledge, grief frequently instead of delight. This world of forms has proceeded out of the utter formless state of the Being, a state that is at once indivisible and impenetrable, since it is one and self-charged. How then could delusion and grief find entry into it? Obviously, a contradiction. For they are not an aftermath of the birth of the world. They seem to have been born as its inseparable adjuncts and must have entered into the creative movement, coeval with the manifestation of material forms.

6. The mind of the dull, with these doubts (afflicted), loosened in its frame, insensitive to (truer) feeling, grazes like the animal on the surface.

¹ अथैको भूतानां भुवनजनिकर्ता स भगवान्
स्वयं सर्वो जातो निरवधिकचिन्मोद इति चेत् ।
स्वरूपे नीरूपे प्रभवितुरखण्डे च गहने
कथं सम्मोहो वा कथमिव च शोकोऽन्तरमियात् ॥ ५ ॥

SADHANA SAMRAJYAM

The Wise regard these talks that embrace unbounded the fanciful revolutions of the mind as thousands of leaves that sprout (on the tree).¹

Such are the many doubts that afflict the human mind which has not yet outgrown its infancy. Such a mind always loves to flit from object to object, skimming on the surface of everything and exhausts itself in the process without a corresponding substantial gain. In the end it gets bewildered, chaotic and loses the sense of direction and lands on the arid sands of agnosticism. It is ever busy on its own rounds of arguments and counter-arguments which never end. For it is the very nature of the gross human mind which indulges in this pastime to see things piece-meal, to form its own notions on that slender basis, erect theories or formulations of its apprehension of the part as if it were the whole. And when, as is bound to happen, the mind stumbles upon other data which contradict its initial speculations, it proceeds to demolish the old and build up a new in its place. Needless to say, the 'new' also follows the way of the old. That has been the story of the superficial mind of man all over; there is no end to its peregrinations which are likened by the wise to the never-ending sprouts of leaves on the branches of a tree. The leaves may be removed, yet they spring up again and again. So do the fanciful imaginations and doubts of the mind go on repeating themselves however much you may meet and answer them. Such a mind gets weakened in its constitution; the ceaseless and intense activity of this kind eats into the very texture of the mental organ and renders it rickety just as purposeless and unorganised activity of the body tends to exhaust it. It becomes dry and loses savour. For it loses contact with all higher and truer feeling, all sensitivity to higher values of the soul and heart, which are truly what warm up the whole being. Shorn of this touch the mind becomes matter-of-fact, dry, mechanical and man is the loser.

(To be continued)

T. V. KAPALI SASTRY

- 1 अमीभिस्सन्देहैः शिथिलितवपुर्वेदनजडं
मनो यन्मन्दानां चरति मृगवद्गाधचरितम् ।
तदेवंवादानामनवधिकधीविभ्रमजुषां
प्ररोहान् पर्णानामयुतमिव पश्यन्ति सुधियः ॥ ६ ॥

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(I)

The Japji of Guru Nanak Translated by Sirdar Sher Singh of Junagadh.

There is hardly a Hindu of any education anywhere, who has not heard of the great saint, Guru Nanak Dev, who does not hold this sublime soul in deep veneration. But to the Sikh, he is something more. He is the great founder of the Sikh cult, the first Guru of the Panth. Even though the Sikhs are divided today into two warring sections, even though only one of the two sections calls itself Nanak-panthi, even though of late years the bitterness between the two factions has found expression in murders and massacres, it is certain that the Adi-Guru is profoundly revered by all who bear the name of Sikh—not only the Guru himself, but his great book the Granth Saheb and his Japji, the master-key to the Faith. Of Japji the translator says, "It is the sublimest Sikh Scripture, so deep and condensed that the whole Guru Granth is considered to be but a commentary on the same." There are several English translations, already existing, of this sublime little book. We are not in a position to make any comparison. Nor, truly speaking, are we qualified to pronounce on the faithfulness of the present rendering. It is enough that even through this English garb we can form a clear idea of the original.

The very first thing that one sees, on a reading of the book, is that there is nothing narrow or sectarian in it. The whole of it is acceptable to every lover of God. The Mul-mantram begins:-

O! One-in-all. O! All-in-one!
The Omkar Thou—The Womb Golden!
Root of Righteousness and of Truth,
Thy name is Truth—Satnam in Sooth!
The Creator Thou, of all that is,

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The Person-pervasive, in Eternal Bliss!
Above all time, Yea Eternity verily,
The Akal-Purkh Thou, Timeless One, free!

There is nothing artificial about these few lines. The flow is spontaneous and free. We are not qualified to pronounce on the English versification and we say nothing. But there are stanzas like this one, where the diction sounds smooth enough:-

Thus hemmed in, as we are,
By the Law of Karma, on every side;
Thy Grace alone, O Lord, saith Nanak
Can bring to us the Truth's own Tide.

Of a Guru or preceptor, Nanak says—the “Guru is God-Incarnate, our Rescuer on earth!”

The Guru alone can make me feel
That Thou art here! That Thou art there!
The Guru alone can make me *see*
The Living Reality—Everywhere!

There is one peculiar line in this poem, however,

“Parvati—The Isis—Mother molten in love!”

Surely, Guru Nanak did not say “Isis” in the original!

Worldly glory vis-a-vis God-realisation has been brought out by the Guru in the following significant lines:—

Were I to live all Ages—Four,
Yea, tenfold more, in that measure;
Were my name trumpeted to all Climes—Nine,
And all danced attendance on me, to be sure!
So much renowned, if I were to be,
That I caught every one's look,
Yet, if I did not catch Thy Eye, O Lord,
I would be an outcast! an untouchable! a shook!

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Yet Nanak Dev did not teach world-renunciation, a life of inaction, as his conception of the five realms amply shows. They are: Dharam-Khand, Gyan-Khand, Saram-Khand, Karam-Khand and Sach-Khand—the Realms of Duty, Knowledge, Beauty, Divine Action and Truth Divine.

A few lines from this portion of Japji would make the meaning of this division into five Divine Khands clear.

I

Thus, the raw ones ripen—nay, do glisten,
They are Transfigured!—without and within!
But of this Mysterious Spirit, N A M—they know.
Who to This—Thy First Kingdom—go!

II

Such is Dharam Khand—the Kingdom First,
Wherein the Guiding motive is 'Duty'—Right-a-thurst,
Let's on to the Second Kingdom go—
To Gyan Khand—where Intuition doth glow.

III

Higher still is Saram Khand—the Kingdom Three,
Which is That!—One of N A M—loved Humility!
Herein is most exquisite Transformation wrought!
Yea, Beauty Divine is, by the Holy Word, in-caught!

IV

Still higher is the Karam Khand, Kingdom fourth
That of Activity Divine! Selfless—F I A T—in sooth.
Herein, Lo! the consciousness of N A M is so intense—
that All becometh ONE! None else! In every sense!

V

Highest than all is the Sri Sach Khand—sublime,
The Realm of Reality—Above all Time!

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The little book before us is excellent reading in spite of a certain amount of crudity. We would suggest a little polishing up, when the author brings out a second edition.

C. C. DUTT

(II)

The Nature of Creative Art: By K. S. Venkataramani. Svetaranya Ashram, Kaveripoompattinam, P.O. Tanjore District, S. India; pp. 33+X, Price Re. 1/-.

The question of the relationship between Life and Art has been raised and discussed in a variety of ways. And though no satisfying single clear-cut answer has been given, one principle seems to have found general acceptance. That is, there can be no divorce between the two. They are inter-related. Precisely in what manner, continues to be the subject of debate. Does Art need Life to nourish it? Does Life need Art to adorn and interpret it? Or to put it in another form, is it the artist in the poet that distinguishes his creations or is it the essential man in him that is the determining factor? We will take a feeble echo of the original from a Sanskrit poet:

“Oh Thou of lofty fame! At the very remembrance of thee, there behold! serried groups of crowded thoughts gush forth in their legion, irrepressible like the waters of the sea at the sight of the moon.”

When we come across a vivid imagery of this kind, is it easy to answer the question? The poet describes what is a universal experience of the seeker. The moment one begins to meditate, whole hosts of ideas and thought-movements rush up. This bewildering experience in the being of the Yogin recalls to the poet in him the image of the waves of the ocean heaving turbulently at the cooling rays of the moon. We need not further ponder over the suggestion and the aptness implied in the imagery. We would only ask ourselves, in what precisely does the beauty of the lines lie? Is it in the imagery of the poetic mind or in the faithful capture of a genuine experience in life? Really, both race together and mutually enrich themselves to the perennial delight of a *sahridaya*.

We were led to these musings by the posers in Socratic style put by Sri Venkataramani on the very first page of his engaging little book—*The Nature of Creative Art*—viz., What is Life? What is Art? Does Life feed

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Art or Art feed Life? and his answer: "If Life be the Leela or play called forth by the primal urge of evolution, Art is the grest mirror that reflects this play of Life and imprisons for joy and study the evanescent flow of Life in its immortal mood". (p. 2)

Himself a consummate literary artist, Sri Venkataramani has condensed in these twenty-seven pages of epigrammatic prose an eminently readable and stimulating account of his enquiry into the domain of creative Art and allied topics of Rhythm, Style, Criticism, etc. His thoughts are scintillating and are, as it were, a series of footprints on his own journey of *Swa-anubhava*, personal experience, into the realm of Art and Life. The root of all genuine Art, says the author, is in *Swa-anubhava*, a realisation in oneself of some truth or aspect of Truth, some deep apperception by the artist and a subsequent outpouring of it—whether in letters, in line or in stone. And in creation, 'Rhythm is the basic wand'. (p.3) Rhythm is the soul of beauty and all Art is successful to the extent to which this rhythm is assembled and created. In literature this rhythm is captured through the suggestiveness and the sound-value of words. Words are not inert collection of letters. The vibratory or sound element of a word has a significance deeper than we are apt to recognise. And this is perfectly true and can be better appreciated in the light of what Sri Aurobindo says: "The word", he remarks, "is a sound expression of the idea. In the supra-physical plane when an idea is to be realised, one can, by repeating the word-expression of it, produce vibrations which prepare the mind for the realisation of the idea."

The personality of the creator, adds the author, is more decisive in literature than elsewhere and the capacity and sincerity with which he transmutes his feeling into thought are a measure of his achievement. It is again the authenticity of his experience and the expressive power of his being that go to shape the style. Style, the author says, 'is the result of words inlaid in Rhythm' and when he quotes with approval Buffon's dictum that Style is the man, on the surface it looks odd and one may think that this definition errs by the fallacy of *Hysteron proteron*. But the author goes on to observe, with Thoreau, that style is "an indivisible whole" and recalls the old idea that 'Soul is Form.' And truly so; for man is the style; it is the level of the mind, the state of development of the power of expression, the soul-quality of the man that go, in their ensemble, to determine their characteristic mode of unfoldment. Style is the result, not a determinant of the personality of the creator. Form is no less important, the author continues, than matter. "To a particular mode of experience as sensed and

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revealed by a creative artist every idea has only one word to carry it correctly"—the *mot juste* of Gustave Flaubert. Only when that is found—the inevitable word—is the desired rhythm achieved. We may state, in passing, that the conception of *the* word is as old as the Vedic Rishis and it has been scrupulously respected in the pre-classical and classical tradition of Sanskrit literature. It is happy to note that the author has seized the ancient spirit and adapts it to the renewed and living forms of the age to which his own literary activity is no mean contribution.

The chapter on Criticism and Creative Art is brilliant. There is no opposition, he holds, between the two. Genuine critical effort is creative in intent and all creative effort is 'of the essence of criticism'. The aim of both is the same: 'to get at a correct view of reality'. As in creative art, so in criticism, the earnestness of feeling, sympathy, identification are indispensable for quality. They differ only in modes of expression. "Creative art tries to reach its goal and fulfil itself by a perfectly timed leap...gains its end by rapid selection in order to evolve a synthesis by which the ordinary range of consciousness is widened...relies on its own impetus for freeing its own imprisoned energy for a flight to the stars. Criticism is...less spectacular. It works by analysis. It needs and seeks another, like the ruby that waits to be set in gold to gain its true radiance. But both are intensive quests in search after the 'abiding relations'...the goal is the same whether one reaches by 'exalted flight' soaring as creative artists do, or on foot, exploring and measuring and ascending painfully like mountaineers, as critics do. The peak once gained has the same refreshing atmosphere of sunlight and joy." (p. 14).

It is pleasing to find that the author refuses to limit the reach of Art to the confines of aesthetic idealism. To him, as to us, 'all great art...is one of the authentic modes of self-realisation'. It is a means of rarefying the mental layers, of heightening and subtilising one's own consciousness and, at its best, of breaking the veil between the limited outer personality and the inner and larger being whence originates all true creative impulse.

The brochure begins with a brilliant Foreword by Sri C. P. Ramaswami Iyer who draws attention, among other things, to the need of Art ceasing to be horizontal and confined to a particular layer of society. If Art is to carry out its high mission, it must require to be *vertical*, cutting through and 'transcending social divisions and groups'.

M. P. PANDIT

THE WAY OF FATE*

(These lines written within the month preceding His passing away are tremendously significant and revelatory. They prove that it was a deliberate choice made by the Master to "beard the lion in his own den" and that he knew perfectly well what he was about and meant to utilise the choice to the best advantage for the realisation of his life-long aim. These prophetic lines embody, one can say, his last testament and will.—Ed.)

He must call light into its dark abysms,
Else never can Truth conquer Matter's sleep
And all earth look into the eyes of God.
All things obscure his knowledge must relume,
All things perverse his power must unknot:
He must pass to the other shore of falsehood's sea,
He must enter the world's dark to bring there light.
The heart of evil must be bared to his eyes,
He must learn its cosmic dark Necessity,
Its right and its dire roots in Nature's soil.
He must know the thought that moves the demon act
And justifies the Titan's erring pride
And the falsehood lurking in earth's crooked dreams.
He must enter the eternity of Night
And know God's darkness as he knows the Sun.
For this he must go down into the pit,
For this he must invade the dolorous Vasts.
Imperishable and wise and infinite,
He still must travel Hell the world to save.
Into the eternal Light he shall emerge
On borders of the meeting of all worlds.....

*Savitri, Book VI, Canto 2

THE WAY OF FATE

Then shall be ended here the Law of Pain,
Earth shall be made a home of Heaven's light.....
This mortal life shall house Eternity's bliss,
The body's self taste immortality.
Then shall the world-redeemer's task be done.

*
**

In this enormous world standing apart
In the mightiness of her silent spirit's will,
In the passion of her soul of sacrifice
Her lonely strength facing the universe,
Affronting fate asks not man's help nor god's:
Sometimes one life is charged with earth's destiny,
It cries not for succour from the time-bound powers.
Alone she is equal to her mighty task.....
As a star, uncompanioned, moves in heaven
Unastonished by the immensities of space,
Travelling infinity by its own light,
The great are strongest when they stand alone.
A God-given might of being is their force,
A ray from self's solitude of light the guide.....
A day may come when she must stand unhelped
On a dangerous brink of the world's doom and hers.
Carrying the world's future on her lonely breast,
Carrying the human hope in a heart left sole
To conquer or fail on a last desperate verge
Alone with death and close to extinction's edge.
Her single greatness in that last dire scene,
She must cross alone a perilous bridge in Time
And reach an apex of world-destiny
Where all is won or all is lost for man.
In that tremendous silence lone and lost
Of a deciding hour in the world's fate,
In her soul's climbing beyond mortal time
When she stands sole with Death or sole with God
Apart upon a silent desperate brink,
Alone with her self and death and destiny

THE ADVENT

As on some verge between Time and Timelessness
When being must end or life rebuild its base,
Alone she must conquer or alone must fall.
No human aid can reach her in that hour,
No armoured God stand shining at her side.
Cry not to heaven, for she alone can save.
For this the silent Force came missioned down;
In her the conscious Will took human shape,
She only can save herself and save the world.

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